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effects on the balance of the political parties**

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**REDISTRIBUTION AND THE SECOND REFORM ACT: THE
INTENDED, AND UNINTENDED, ELECTORAL EFFECTS ON
THE BALANCE OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES.**

Richard Digby Anthony Woodberry

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts, January 2007.

99,794 words (including all constituency detail in tables).

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ABSTRACT

Whilst both high politics and pressure from below have been both fully and brilliantly studied on the complex events of the years 1866-8, redistribution, as a political concept and effect in its own right, has been rather neglected. The reasons for this are obvious. It lacked the gladiatorial nature of the parliamentary battle, few politicians were intimate with its intricacies, only a net fifty-two seats were changed and to build an edifice of c. four hundred individual constituencies takes time. Nevertheless, the politics of no change and lack of intention was as important, and as interesting, in rather different ways, to the more obvious attractions of the great debates on the nature of constitutional representation in 1866, the dancing on eggshells in the following year and the Irish Church question and General Election of 1868.

Partly for reasons of space and time and also to do with the nature of the voluminous evidence, the study is focused on the years 1866-8, though it is put into its context, both before and afterwards. Documents have been quoted, where relevant, to aid other writers in their approach to the period and to give a flavour and authenticity to the work which was undertaken.

What emerges is a limited triumph of sorts for Disraeli. A success it was in a party sense because it was a Conservative settlement, it avoided what had to be achieved at all costs, a second Whig/Liberal Reform Bill and it tilted a previously unfair and clearly gerrymandered system, emanating from 1832, back to, if not a position of Tory advantage, then at least to one of some sort of equilibrium. In that sense the final redistribution of 1868 was a negative victory, in that it avoided something worse.

The first third of the writing tells the tale of redistribution from when it first re-appeared as a political issue after 1832, the re-emergence in 1848 effectively and rather neatly coinciding with Disraeli's de facto leadership of the Protectionist party in the House of Commons. The remaining two thirds divide Great Britain up into seven major psephological and regional areas in order to see the impact, both intended and unintended, on the individual constituencies. What emerges, and perhaps surprises, is the knowledge and understanding of the British electoral system in general, and its parliamentary seats in particular, which Disraeli had mastered by the time that Liberal error had, rather fortuitously, given him the opportunity to put his ideas and plans into practice. The conclusion of a limited Tory redistribution was due

to the political situation and the not to be forgotten circumstance of a parliamentary minority of c. sixty-five seats – in normal circumstances. Disraeli's unique ability to keep matters abnormal was the key to his settlement.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original, except where indicated by special reference in the text, and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other academic award. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED:

Richard Wordbeary

DATE:

July 10th,
2007.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.

The Problem and the Nature of the Evidence

The issue of redistribution and its relationship to the famous reforms of 1867 can best be seen in terms of Hamlet's father: rarely witnessed, not studied, yet central to the unfolding of great events. The reasons why this should be the case are clear: the question was somewhat arcane, as with Schleswig-Holstein few understood its complexities and not very many seats were altered in 1868 anyway.¹ The matter was often the bridesmaid and rarely the bride. In 1866 redistribution was overshadowed by the superb debates on the franchise, in 1867 by the sheer spectacle of the political battle by outstanding parliamentarians and in 1868 by the Irish Church and the impending election.

The main primary source for the question is the Disraeli archive.² This is because he knew the issues involved, was interested in the question, kept his papers and had the good fortune to have secretaries and relatives who realised the value of the accumulated treasures, which were often scrappy and, in a sense, of tangential and local interest only, until put together into a coherent whole.³ There are twenty-three boxes marked "Electoral Reform" which provide the starting point. The material covers all the associated topics of the franchise, ballot papers, corruption and constituencies. It is inevitably something of a jumble: mainly in-letters, notes, statistics, census material and working papers. This bric-a-brac was, in part, built for Disraeli by the voluminous correspondence he received from party agents, supporters and workers throughout the country, as well as the big-wigs, M.P.s and landowners who formed his more staple correspondents.

¹ In 1832, 143, in 1867-8, 52 and in 1885, perhaps all parliamentary constituencies could be deemed to have changed persona.

² The Hughenden Papers, owned by the National Trust, are on permanent loan at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, Department of Western Manuscripts (Modern Political Papers).

³ A magnificent catalogue of the papers exists, prepared by Dr. R.W. Stewart in 1961 and revised in 1968. Disraeli had no direct, legitimate descendants.

Previous authorities have not fully used this material in any constituency based, or specifically psephological way, though it clearly has been part of the writing of the outstanding generation of scholars from the 1960s.⁴ In particular, one has the sense that biographies, realising the irredeemably technical nature of this material, have passed it quickly by. Disraeli shared with his radical ex-friend, John Bright, the belief that redistribution was a more important question than the franchise - especially for the Tories. Evidence of this view was the cavalier acceptance of Hodgkinson's famous Amendment in 1867 as being of no great importance, especially as Disraeli had not thought through its potential consequences. However, where such new voters were placed was of crucial significance.

The twenty-three "Electoral Reform" boxes cover the years 1852-68, so there was clearly little support for a third measure of reform at some stage in the 1870s. The bulk of the material is on the latter years. Only the Eastern Question attracted as much correspondence both in the archive and, perhaps, in the Disraelian mind. There are also relevant letters in other sections of the papers: "Major" and "General Correspondence," the "Kitchen Cabinet" (which incorporates the later Sir Philip Rose addition) and "Visits".

There were, of course, no formal Cabinet minutes, only the prime ministerial letters to the monarch, mainly for the 1866-8 Tory governments from Derby, not Disraeli. Victoria may have had entirely personal reasons (Balmoral and John Brown) for wishing for a speedy "settlement" but she was a factor in the political equation and this knowledge, sensitively forwarded by her ministers helped to bring about Tory party unity.

The letters from, and to, his various writers require careful sifting as they are rarely one dimensional and the more senior the writer, the more discursive in its range of topics are the letters. This is most notable with Derby, as the two of them considered not only the whole range of problems faced by mid-Victorian governments but also the strategy and tactics to be used over reform in general and redistribution in particular.

⁴ The most obviously relevant works are: R.W.Blake: "Disraeli", 1966; M.Cowling: "1867: Disraeli, Gladstone and Revolution", 1967; H.J.Hanham: "Elections and Party Management: Politics in the time of Gladstone and Disraeli", 1959 and F.B.Smith: "The Making of the Second Reform Act", 1866. R. Shannon: "The Age of Disraeli, 1868-81: The Rise of Tory Democracy", New York, 1992, is more relevant for the consequences of 1867-8. The only writing on the minutiae of redistribution was J.R.Vincent's outstanding article on Lancashire, which is noted in the chapter on the North West. The place of publication is London unless otherwise stated.

Magnificent though the collection is, there are gaps and difficulties. Disraeli did not correspond, especially when the Commons was sitting, about redistribution, in detail, with any particular colleague or confidant, except Derby and his “Kitchen Cabinet”. His meticulous attendance in the House, at the Cabinet, his personal meetings with the “Kitchen Cabinet”, M.P.s and other colleagues left little spare time for informal letters. Nor, sadly, did his secretaries exercise due caution over the keeping of letters out. Earle was slap-dash, had his own career to think of and wished to become a M.P., probably to keep him from his debtors. Corry was forever off to social events in London, due both to political reasons and the need to see girlfriends, be they actual, prospective or someone else’s.

Apart from the premier, Disraeli’s closest political associates were Cairns, Hardy, Northcote and Stanley. Fortunately, five members of the 1866-8 Cabinets kept diaries for some, or all, of the time.⁵ Stanley’s Diaries are the more interesting and discursive of the two published ones because he was more reflective than Hardy. The latter’s is the more meticulous record and possesses both the lawyer’s fastidious attention to detail and innate sense of caution but particularly for the earlier years, when he was busier, lacks much in the way of political discourse and comment. Both diarists were key ministers with major departments to run, without a great deal of help and with difficult, time consuming and urgent problems that required careful and constant attention and Disraeli’s support. Stanley had to divert and control Napoleon III’s restiveness after Sadowa and Hardy had to keep Ireland governable and the Fenians at bay.

Disraeli’s nearest personal relationships tended not to be with Cabinet colleagues, with the possible exception of Cairns. Disraeli was insufficiently introspective to keep a diary but instead by the mid-1860s he unbent by letter with younger men and older women. There was, though, no Lady Bradford for the 1865-8 Parliament.

⁵ For Hardy, see Nancy E. Johnson, editor: “The Diary of Gathorne Hardy, later Lord Cranbrook, 1866-92, Political Selections”, 1981; for Stanley, see J.R.Vincent, editor: “Disraeli, Derby and the Conservative Party, The Political Journals of Lord Stanley, 1849-69”, 1978 and “Derby Diaries, 1869-78”, 1994. P. Gordon’s edition of Carnarvon’s Diary is scheduled for publication in 2005. The unpublished ones for Manners and Northcote are at Belvoir Castle and the British Library respectively. There remains the confused state of the Malmesbury archive at Winchester and the question of whether or not this merits the name of “Diary” at all.

His wife, ageing and unwell by autumn 1867, remained the first repository for his insight and acuity into affairs until her death.⁶ However, her interests were more social than political and there is missing the equivalent of the great collection of letters to Weston Park from 1873 onwards.⁷ The nearest equivalent to a Lady Caroline Norton from the 1820s or a Henrietta Sykes from the 1830s was Lady Dorothy Nevill. Disraeli found her to be ravishingly attractive but not politically percipient.⁸ She was a descendant of Horace Walpole, the sister of one of Disraeli's best friends, Lord Orford and a relative of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff. The Hughenden manuscripts are, therefore, the main source for the inside story of redistribution from 1865-8, with some inevitable gaps, whilst the public tale is available via the parliamentary record and the newspapers. "Hansard's Parliamentary Debates" and "The Times" provided the best day by day record but the former in particular cannot delineate attendance, drunkenness, levels of oral support, mood, noise and reception.⁹ Nor were newspapers, and their reporters, any less biased, or not, than anyone else.

⁶ Mary Anne Disraeli, Viscountess Beaconsfield; 1792-1872; m. to Disraeli 1839. Although she sparkles to best effect in Blake, op. cit., and in D.H.Elletson: "Maryannery", 1959, there are more sedate studies in J.Sykes: "Mary Anne Disraeli: the story of Viscountess Beaconsfield", 1928 and F.E.Baily: "Lady Beaconsfield and her times", 1935.

⁷ See the Marquis of Zetland, editor: "The Letters of Disraeli to Lady Bradford and Lady Chesterfield, 1873-81", 1929. The originals are in the Staffordshire Records Office, there are gaps and variations between the published version and the original letters.

⁸ He wrote:

"Lady Dorothy Nevill...a very clever woman: equal to Professor Hooker as a botanist, with the finest pinetum and "conservatoires" and collection of rare trees in the world...introduced the silk-worm into England...wrote a very good pamphlet...the finest and most fanciful emblazoner...with absolute beauty, wild and bewitching and yet she never read one of Horace Walpole's letters and indeed anything else except the Morning Post".

Disraeli's notes, n.d., 1862, Hughenden Papers (hereafter H.P.), Box 26/2, Ref. A/X/A/41: see Ralph Nevill, editor: "The Reminiscences of Lady Dorothy Nevill", 1906. As for the possible relationship between the two of them, see S.Weintraub: "Disraeli", 1993 and C.Hibbert: "Disraeli", 2004.

⁹ Disraeli advised a young supporter:

"When the House is sitting, be in your place. When it is not sitting, read Hansard". See J. Pope Hennessy: "Verandah: Some Episodes in the Crown Colonies", 1964, p. 38.

Editorial policy could have a strange genesis.¹⁰ The nearest the Conservatives came to a friendly press baron in the period was Edward Levy but only after the demise of Palmerston.¹¹ His paper, the "Daily Telegraph" had been the great mass-circulation Liberal paper of the Palmerstonian centre. Its out-gunned Tory counterpart was the "Standard", with the "Daily News" the organ of the Liberal Left. Disraeli attempted to counter this imbalance throughout his career by either buying a newspaper or a reporter.¹² However, a hostile press was a fact of Disraelian life and just had to be accepted. The balance in the Liberals' favour was in the region of 5-1.¹³ Contemporary literature included the periodicals, pamphlets, essays and collections of speeches. There was no particular evidence that this changed anything or, indeed, influenced party, political or public opinion. The periodicals included the highly respectable, ones where Beresford Hope, Gladstone and Salisbury could let off steam, to the essentially visual, such as

¹⁰ "The hostility of "The Times" to your Government, proceeded, I thought from Mr. Walter and dated from the last election, when he was beaten by the 3 Tories in Berkshire". Lord Henry Gordon-Lennox to Disraeli, H.P., October 8th, 1868, Box 102/4, Ref. B/XX/Lx./318.

The paper was certainly keen for the Tories to take up the reform question during the winter of 1866-7 but its support could not be taken for granted. The suspicion remains that Walter's political aspirations in Berkshire were rather more important to the paper's editorial policy than the merits, or otherwise, for example, of cumulative voting. Disraeli's secretary commented:

"I hear there has been a split in "The Times" management on the support they have given us: - this may account for some recent articles". Montagu Corry (hereafter Corry) to Disraeli, January 2nd, 1867, H.P., Box 94/1, Ref. B/XX/Co./20.

John Walter, junior, proprietor "The Times"; 1818-94; M.P. (Lib.-Con.) Nottingham 1847-59, (Lib.) Berkshire 1859-65 and 1868-85.

¹¹ Edward Levy-Lawson, cr. baronet 1892, 1st Baron Burnham 1903; 1833-1916; editor "Daily Telegraph", 1855-; assumed name of Lawson, 1875.

¹² The semi-journalist, Frederick Wordsworth Haydon, 1827-86, was the nearest Disraeli came to it. There are 100 letters from him to Disraeli during the years 1852-79 in the Hughenden collection, which was a lot for a minor figure. He acted as Disraeli's eyes and ears in Ireland for part of 1867. F.W.Haydon, second son of the painter, B.R.Haydon; factory inspector 1859-67, then dismissed by Hardy.

¹³ However, a clerical correspondent from 1865 was more positive about the situation:

"Papers of a Conservative tendency: John Bull, The Press, The Morning Herald, The Standard, The Church and State.

Papers of a Whig and Destructive tendency: The Times, The Daily News, Morning Post, The Express, Morning Advertiser, The Star, Morning Chronicle, The Telegraph, The Globe, Punch, the Sun, The Guardian.

In respect of reviews, besides "The Quarterly" and "Blackwood's", the rest, perhaps, are all of ultra-Whig tendencies.

Of provincial papers... (two I know only), the Sussex, Surrey and Kent Express which circulates through these counties, and the Gloucestershire Chronicle on most subjects is what may be called Liberal Conservative". Reverend J. Cooper to Disraeli, April 17th, 1865, H.P., Box 88/2, Ref. B/XX/A/165.

“Punch” or “Vanity Fair”, and the racier and more scandalous collections, “The Owl” and “The Queen’s Messenger”, the “Private Eyes” of their day.¹⁴

The third major evidential source is the contemporary and secondary statistical collections.¹⁵ Disraeli relied upon Dod, the 1861 census, the parliamentary returns (especially for 1866), his own intuition and understanding of the 1832 electoral system, thirty years of opposition politics and his “Kitchen Cabinet” to help formulate his views over redistribution. By 1867, he was knowledgeable about well over half the English constituencies, especially the counties, the proposed new boroughs, some of which were first proposed in the early 1850s, those seats which had sitting Tory M.P.s in the 1865 Parliament and the great towns, where there was a Conservative interest. An absence of information implied that the seat in question could not be part of a remodelled Tory settlement, overthrowing the corrupt “Whig job” of 1832. This level of knowledge was a unique achievement for a Chancellor of the Exchequer (1867-8) and a Prime Minister (1868). Unusually for politicians, Disraeli rather liked elections (though he was appallingly bad at predicting their outcomes) and tried to gauge possibilities from them. His own electoral record as party leader should be favourably compared with those of the 14th Earl of Derby, Peel and Salisbury.¹⁶ Nor has any other Prime Minister written a novel about an election.¹⁷

As to what is currently missing, presumed non-existent, the biggest single lacuna lies within the party hierarchy, whether in the Commons with the Chief Whip, or outside it at the Carlton Club, where the Election Committee was based, and held sway, in 1865-8. As far as the Chief Whips are concerned, Jolliffe’s papers at Taunton are a major source for the 1850s but Taylor’s do not seem to have

¹⁴ “The Quarterly Review” and “The Saturday Review” were the best journals in the first category. For the periodicals in general, see W.E.Houghton, editor: “The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals, 1824-1900”. “The Queen’s Messenger” is available for a few months only in 1867-8 at the Bodleian Library, Oxford; “The Owl: a Wednesday journal of politics and society” is available at The London Library for 1864-9.

¹⁵ The main works of reference are: J.Bateman: “The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland”, 1883; F.W.S.Craig: “British Parliamentary Election Results, 1832-85”, 1977; Charles R. Dod: “Electoral Facts, 1832-53, Impartially Stated”, edited by H.J.Hanham, 1972 and Dod’s “Parliamentary Companions 1867 and 1868”; Ward and Lock: “Guide to the House of Commons, 1880”; F.H.McCalmont: “The Parliamentary Poll Book of All Elections, 1832-1918”, edited by J.R.Vincent and M. Stenton, with introduction and additional material, 1974.

¹⁶ During his formative years as a politician Disraeli fought the following elections and they were rough and tumble affairs: 1832 and 1835 High Wycombe, 1835 Taunton, 1837 Maidstone and 1841 Shrewsbury. Once safely ensconced in Buckinghamshire he only fought two further contests in 1852 and 1874. Bacon and old clothes was a political education second to none.

¹⁷ Benjamin and Sarah Disraeli: “A Year at Hartlebury, or The Election”, 1834.

survived, perhaps because he was an Irish landlord, apart from bits and pieces in other archives. Of the later Chief Whips, Hart Dyke's twenty-six letters from Disraeli are in Canada. They begin in 1868 and mainly cover the 1874-80 Parliament. As for the Carlton Club Election Committee, Abergavenny appears to have left very few traces of his influence and was never a M.P. Of the principal party agents, and their assistants, Baxter's and Spofforth's papers are essentially part of the Hughenden archive, with the Sir Philip Rose collection forming a sub-section of the Disraeli manuscripts.¹⁸

¹⁸ The dates of the principal party office-holders were:

Chief Whips

Sir William Jolliffe 1853-9

Colonel T.E.Taylor 1859-68

Gerard Noel 1868-73

Colonel T.E.Taylor 1873-4

Sir William Hart Dyke 1874-80

Rowland Winn 1880-5

Aretas Akers-Douglas 1885-95

Principal Party Agents

Sir Philip Rose 1853-9

Markham Spofforth 1859-70

(Assistants R. D. Baxter and
H. Smith)

Sir John Gorst 1870-7

W.B.Skene 1877-80

Sir John Gorst 1880-2

G.C.T.Bartley 1882-5

Captain R.W.E. Middleton 1885-
1903

Carlton Election Committee: 1st Marquis of Abergavenny 1865 and 1868 (Spofforth removed 1868).

Of the above individuals only Hart Dyke (West Kent), Noel (Rutland) and Taylor (County Dublin) were M.P.s for the whole of the 1865 Parliament, whilst Jolliffe was until July 1866 only.

CHAPTER 2: DISRAELI AND THE “KITCHEN CABINET”.

Disraeli

Disraeli did not make the decision as to whether or not reform should be taken up by the Tories at all. Once the Liberals had acted, and failed, in 1866, and Derby had decided to run with the issue in the autumn, all else followed. There had to be a Conservative attempt, possibly a bill, to try and create a temporary settlement, if only to forestall the possibility of a second Liberal measure, once the party had presumably re-united, as usual, in 1867-8. Disraeli's response to the sequence of events was, inevitably, somewhat defensive and, given the parliamentary arithmetic, reactive and pragmatic. For those of an unbending disposition, no doubt he was also unprincipled. It did not really do to stick to one's principles, even if one had any, when faced with a parliamentary deficit in the Commons of 70. The situation was fluid and the stakes high. There were, after all, five Prime Ministers in three years between 1865-8.¹ Disraeli's own position mirrored this period of rapid change.² It did not pay to make too many long term plans.

His position was somewhat precarious following yet another general election debacle in 1865. Whilst the loss of 1847 may be laid at the door of Bentinck, Disraeli was in overall charge of electoral arrangements from 1852 onwards, a period which saw four separate defeats.³ Only once since 1832 had the party been victorious, in 1841. Its next best performance was in 1859 which saw a huge, expensive and unavailing effort made. The election of 1865 was an unmitigated, and unexpected, disaster.⁴

Without generic change everlasting opposition loomed. Given their almost permanent minority status since 1832, the Conservatives faced becoming the British equivalent of the comic opera parties of the reactionary European right, which had so signally failed to turn the clock back to either 1789 or 1815 in the first half of the nineteenth century. As both a European statesman and a

¹ Palmerston 1865, Russell 1865-6, Derby 1866-8, Disraeli 1868 and Gladstone 1868 onwards.

² Leader of the Opposition, Commons only, until summer 1866, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the Commons 1866-8, Prime Minister 1868 and Leader of the Opposition 1868 onwards.

³ 1852, 1857, 1859 and 1865.

⁴ Cairns commented about 1865:

“The Whigs expect to lose 5 or 6 seats on the whole...” Cairns to Barrington, June 24th, 1865, Barrington Papers, Duke University, North Carolina.

Francophile, Disraeli realised this. No matter that the party had been responsible for both 1829 and 1846; the reputation for backwardness, buttressed by the gerrymandering of 1832 had somehow to be broken. Whether a reunited party, brought back together after the schism of 1846-59, could have won another election under the franchise and constituency dispensations of 1832, once Palmerston had gone, cannot be known. Such an election was never held. The key fact was that Disraeli did not think it possible.

This electoral conclusion chimed in with his own view that life was progressive, both personally and politically, and that change was inevitable in a constitutional country, where public opinion, as displayed in Parliament, held sway. Initially, he expressed himself through literature with the great bulk of his writing taking place between 1826-52.⁵ However, he was, perhaps, the first to realise that the fantasy world of his earlier novels had gone, if it had ever truly existed, even at the time of writing and it could not be recreated. What remained, by 1865, was a mixed society but one in which the urban, industrial and middle-class elements were growing and the rural, agricultural and aristocratic ones were declining. Surtees' world of protection, the malt tax, the county towns and the squirearchy were no longer the only perquisites for a political majority, certainly not by 1865.⁶

The political dilemma was how to break the Liberal stranglehold. Throughout his career Disraeli tried different panaceas: in the 1830s "Young England", in the 1840s "Party and Protection", in the 1850s "High Finance" and "Little England", in the 1860s "Parliamentary Reform" and in the 1870s "Greater Britain".⁷ Some

⁵ The major works were:

1826 "Vivian Grey"	1837 "Venetia"
1831 "The Young Duke"	"Henrietta Temple"
1832 "Contarini Fleming"	1839 "Count Alarcos"
"Gallomania"	1844 "Coningsby"
1833 "Alroy"	1845 "Sybil"
"The Rise of Iskander"	1847 "Ixion"
"What is He?"	"Tancred"
1834 "A Year at Hartlebury, or The Election"	1852 "Lord George Bentinck"
"The Revolutionary Epick"	1870 "Lothair"
1835 "Vindication of the English Constitution"	1880 "Endymion"
1836 "Letters of Runnymede"	

For discussion of the above, see J.R. Vincent: "Disraeli", 1990.

⁶ Robert Smith Surtees, 1805-64, wrote eight long novels about English fox hunting society. He was the creator of Mr. Jorrocks and Mr. Soapy Sponge. "Handley Cross" is perhaps the best and "Mr. Facey Romford's Hounds" was the last. For discussion of the above, see E.W. Bovill: "The England of Nimrod and Surtees, 1815-54", 1959.

⁷ Inevitably, there was some overlap; foreign policy featured as the main theme at Slough in 1858 and the Merchant Tailors' Hall, June 18th, 1868.

of these ideas and campaigns worked, the majority did not. His critics, and there were many, mistook the travelling and the journey itself for the actual destination. Throughout all the detours, fidelity to party remained a constant theme.⁸

Over a period of two decades, Disraeli developed his thinking on the electoral system. The counties were grievously under-represented. The small boroughs (how small was flexible), seen by Radicals as indefensible, whether on grounds of population, inhabited houses, rateable value or taxation, were not necessarily Tory bastions. Much would depend on where any particular line of disfranchisement was to be drawn. There was no hard and fast rule against the creation of new boroughs; it just depended where they might be created. Clifton, Gosport, Gravesend and Torquay would be fine, and even Croydon and Luton might be acceptable, not in themselves, but because of the beneficial effects their creation would have on the surrounding county. New industrial boroughs in the Midlands and the North, such as in the "Black Country" or in West Yorkshire would be much more problematic and additional such seats in Scotland well nigh disastrous. However, even new boroughs could be manipulated. By taking Liberal voters out of county seats, given the differing county and borough franchises, and by piling up unwanted, huge Liberal majorities in the large towns, the minority party might well negate its numerical disadvantage. Similarly, by redrawing the boundaries of the old boroughs, the political balance in the marginal counties of Cheshire, Durham, Lancashire, Middlesex, Surrey, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Yorkshire could be altered. Thus the Boundary Commission was created along the lines of 1832. The fact that a reunited Liberal party in 1868 was, in part, able to undo some of the Commission's work of 1867 indicated how initially successful Conservative settlement was. The opportunity to manipulate came about because of the events of 1866. Tory tactics were to let the Whigs make the anti-Reform running, provoke Gladstone into becoming intemperate, avoid the kiss of death (for Disraeli) of fusion and point out the deficiencies and consequences of the grouping proposals in the scheme of redistribution. The Whigs were happy to make common cause with Disraeli in 1866, but they were effectively ditched in 1866-7, firstly by their omission from the exclusively Tory Cabinet in June – July,

⁸ "I can assure you that...after considering what is best for the interest of the Party: which, with me, is always the same as the country..." Disraeli to Hardy, September 8th, 1868, Cranbrook Papers, Suffolk Records Office, Ipswich.

1866 and then by the absolute parliamentary necessity of gaining left wing support in 1867. By marrying with the Radicals in the Liberal reunion of 1868 the Whigs achieved their revenge.

Disraeli avoided too close an involvement with the debates on franchise extension in 1866. This was something that he quite favoured anyway, especially if it was mainly relevant to large boroughs only. During autumn 1866 the new Tory Cabinet needed to come up with some sort of plan for 1867. Parliamentary Resolutions, as announced in February 1867, were the best way to remain irresolute or flexible and “to seek the temper of the House”. Treating the Commons with respect was an obvious response to its mistreatment in 1866. Speeches, statements and answers to questions within the House were courteous, tactful and accommodating.⁹ Only after the Commons’ votes of April-May 1867 over the franchise did Disraeli have to start taking redistribution at all seriously. His parliamentary skill during the 1867 session lay in the ability to divide continually the official Opposition coalition into its unofficial bits and pieces. These segments were often internally competitive: Scottish versus London M.P.s, Catholic against Protestant Liberals and large city Radicals juxtaposed with small borough Whigs. This could be achieved by any manner of interesting means. Disraeli could be all things to all men. He could dangle the enticing prospect of more seats to Scotland or could hint at accepting a lodger franchise for London. He could kick difficulties into the long grass and so extend a temporary term of office by announcing a Boundary Commission for the constituencies, a Corrupt Practices Bill for the Radicals (only after reform was safely through) and a delayed election until the registers were up and running. However, if the Radicals refused to play ball there was always the threat of a dissolution with the Tories as the party of reform and the Liberals as the defenders of obstruction. Disraeli’s links with the Radicals were more akin to Chinese whispers than a relationship properly structured. They were, as ever, rather amorphous. There were links with Clay, Torrens and White, in particular. Bright was too close to Gladstone and too

⁹ Outside the House matters were different. At London dinners, or Buckinghamshire constituency meetings, or Conservative association rallies, the tone was sharper and more focused, usually because it was election time.

hated on the Tory benches and had to be kept at a distance. Bernal Osborne was a social ally but political rival.¹⁰

Once office came the general idea was to try and stay put: this would help to give the party a new sense of self confidence and respect. The loss of office by Wellington in 1830 led to the party disasters of 1831-2. Disraeli never forgot this. Corroboration of the need to be in office came with the overt Liberal gerrymandering in 1866. Fortunately, most Tories disliked Gladstone more than they distrusted their own leader. If reform were to come to pass and the party was in control, then it had the opportunity to offset a greatly expanded borough franchise with a low measure of redistribution. Or, if the Commons were to insist on a higher than intended number of changes, it would at least be made under a Conservative government which would give the chance for the right solutions to be arrived at. The initial Tory aim of a low level of redistribution was substantially aided by the fact that Gladstone consistently argued in favour of a radical redrawing of the constituencies, which had little appeal to either Tory or Whig.

Rather extraordinarily, not only did the vast bulk of Disraeli's party follow his lead, in many ways it actually led. The Conservative Adullamites were high on quality but few in number.¹¹ In the Commons the "Cave" centred on Bentinck (until 1865), Beresford Hope, Cranborne (until 1868), Knightley, Newdegate, Peel and Sandford and in the Lords on Bath, Carnarvon and Northumberland. In London, Northumberland House was the plotters' headquarters, outside it Hatfield and possibly Longleat. Apart from hating Disraeli the members of the "Cave" were united by their High Church politics which in some cases had a clear smell of anti-semitism about it. Beresford Hope was the proprietor of the "Saturday Review", was married to Salisbury's sister and termed Disraeli "the Asian mystery", which was the nearest that he could come to being overtly critical of his Commons' Leader's ancestry.

¹⁰ Bernal Osborne to Disraeli:

"You and I both owe our position to our wives"; to which Disraeli is alleged to have replied: "Yes, but I have never forgotten it". See Pope-Hennessy, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

¹¹ "Knightley has been here-very angry-but not believing that we shall make more of a Cave than about 20". Cranborne to Elcho, n.d., [March-April 1867], Elcho Papers, East Lothian, Scotland.

Cranborne gave full vent to his Oxford induced prejudices in his private letters and his journalism.¹² He, and to a slightly lesser extent Carnarvon, feared the long term possibility of working-class electoral dominance, “the cat in charge of the cream jug” and did not think that the Tory party should be the kind owner of the pet.¹³

The 1867 “Cave” had its genesis in the well known plot, marshalled by G.W.P.Bentinck to remove Disraeli in 1860.¹⁴ Previous authorities seem to have played grandmother’s footsteps with Bentinck. Contrary to received wisdom he was not in the House during the 1865-8 Parliament standing down due to poor health.¹⁵ His absence allowed Disraeli an easier run and removed the most likely organiser of an effective party opposition to him in 1867. Some critics could be bought off with office, such as Lord Robert Montagu, who had been a member of the Tory “Cave” but who became Vice-President of the Privy Council (Education) in March 1867. However, every promotion involved demotion and this could swell the ranks of the discontented, such as happened with the replacement of Earle by Corry as Disraeli’s secretary.

Party support came from various quarters and for a motley array of reasons. Office holders wished to retain their positions, urban Tories were relaxed about franchise extension because they thought that the new electors would continue to vote for their traditional leaders and the country gentlemen rather enjoyed, as with Disraeli, being in government. As there were no Conservative M.P.s in London at

¹² “A Gladstone reform bill seems to be preferable to the present thing, 1st, because it will admit fewer voters, 2nd, because it will be in the hands of an honester man and 3rd, because it is of great importance that if such changes are to be made, the Conservatives should be in opposition when they are made”. Cranborne to Elcho, March 21st, 1867, *ibid*.

¹³ In due course Cranborne came to an understanding of the party possibilities of redistribution: if not the author of the great settlement of 1885, Disraeli was, at the least, its progenitor.

¹⁴ Derby had warned then:

I think I ought to tell you that I hear of a cabal...among our people, some of whom will have it that you have come to an understanding with the Radicals, and mean to throw them over on Reform...I hear that Big Ben (of course) is among the leaders of this fronde...” Derby to Disraeli, January 11th, 1860, H.P., Box 110/1, Ref. B/XX/S/260.

Disraeli’s own assessment of Bentinck was as follows:

“G. [W]. P.Bentinck was upwards of 6 feet, 2 inches at least with bandy legs, and the most inhuman face ever encountered. It really was the caricature of a gorilla. Fred Lygon, who was the best looking fellow in the House, said that Bentinck was...the missing link”. Disraeli’s notes, n.d., 1864, H.P., Box 26/3, Ref. A/X/A/63. For Bentinck, see Norfolk; for Lygon, see Worcestershire.

¹⁵ Originating with W.F.Monypenny and G.E.Buckle: “The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield”, six volumes, 1910-20, the confusion over G.W.P.Bentinck, i.e. “Big Ben”, was then copied by Blake, Cowling and Smith in the 1960s. The Bentinck that was involved in the “Cave” was Cavendish Bentinck, then M.P. for Whitehaven.

all during the 1865-8 Parliament, and few in the large cities, urban toryism was more regionally and locally based than its metropolitan and big city Liberal equivalent. However, Liverpool was a major Tory centre and its M.P.s played a key role in pushing Disraeli on. Quite why he did not visit Durham, Leeds and Yorkshire in autumn 1867, along the lines of the "Democracy with Honour" pilgrimage to Lancashire in 1872 containing, as they did, far more actual and potential Conservative seats than Scotland remains a complete mystery. The journey would have been much less fatiguing and the potential rewards far greater.¹⁶

Though in no obvious sense an organised grouping (as with the Radicals), and without a specific leader, Graves being the closest to one, urban and liberal Tories were vitally important to Disraeli. They indicated that the Conservatives were no longer a rural minority. Men such as Beecroft, Goldney, Graves, Horsfall, Jarvis and Laird gave the party an additional dimension and helped to reconnect it to the years before 1846: in the 1840s they would have been Peelites. If he had not died prematurely in 1873, Graves would surely have been in the 1874 Cabinet and it would have been enhanced by his presence. Without this urban and borough support, there would have been no Conservative Reform measure.¹⁷ Unfortunately, these neo-urban Tories were, for the most part, too busy with their mercantile, parliamentary and professional businesses and lives to keep diaries, which remained largely the preserve of the, not idle, but politically different in outlook, Tory aristocracy. A commercial Conservative diary, based on the

¹⁶ Such trips off his usual tramlines of the Commons, Downing Street, Grosvenor Gate and Hughenden were best avoided on health grounds. Torquay in the 1850s and early 1860s and Bournemouth from then on were more appropriate. The refusal to travel to Lancashire in 1867 was due to the fact that the meetings were on Derby's doorstep. The appearance in 1872 was some rectification.

¹⁷ Graves's role may be seen from the following:

"I argued in the Smoking Room of the Carlton that the municipal suffrage was the only basis...with increased strength amongst the Borough Members...Mr. Laird, Mr. Goldney, Major Jervis and myself...the intensity of the feeling...I would undertake to give him proof of the strength of the feeling amongst the Borough Members on the subject.

That night I obtained 22 signatures in favour of the principle of municipal suffrage...The next day, Wednesday...Laird and I drew up the Resolutions...on the Thursday about 150 Members assembled...the Chairman, Sir. M. Ridley, should convey to L[ord] Derby the almost unanimous feeling of the Borough Members.

You know the rest. Should you care to have copies of the Resolutions and the circular calling the Carlton meeting, I will send them to you.

A greater instance of loyalty to colleagues has rarely been met with than Mr. Disraeli displayed in his interview with me".

S. R. Graves's notes to Corry on the reaction of Conservative borough M.P.s to the Ten Minutes Bill, August 27th, 1868, H.P., Box 47/2, Ref. B/Xi/J/183b.

political life and times of Birkenhead, Leeds and Liverpool would add immensely to one's understanding.¹⁸

Prime ministerial support came from Derby, whose party leadership and authority, which came from longevity, principle and social position, was crucial to Disraeli. This was well understood and greatly appreciated. The education of the party was a dual labour it was just that Disraeli went public about it in autumn 1867 in Edinburgh. However, to a large extent, on a daily basis, he had to manage on his own. His three closest allies all left him at some stage during 1866-8. In October 1866 Cairns departed both the Cabinet and the Commons for high judicial office and did not return to front line politics until February 1868, though he was certainly consulted in the background. Derby got through 1867, just, but retired in February 1868 with three major Reform Bills still to be passed. Dudley Baxter left for a mixture of family reasons and office politics in spring 1867.

Elevation to the premiership was not a certainty for Disraeli in early 1868.¹⁹ The "Cave" still existed and even if Disraeli tried to reach an accommodation with the malcontents it was unlikely to be successful.²⁰ The offer was not made and, anyway, the circumstances of 1868 were not those of 1874. There was no known contact between Cranborne and Disraeli from March 1867 until February 1874. The latter never overlooked the possibility of treachery and always kept his cards close to his chest: after all, he remembered how he had risen. Trusted political allies were few and far between. Disraeli wrote to his secretary:

"See Mr. Hunt directly. He is a lieutenant I can confide in wh[ich]. is something".²¹

This instruction predates Hunt's elevation to the Cabinet in February 1868 and is suggestive both of his personal loyalty to Disraeli and his role as link man to the

¹⁸ Unfortunately, no major holding seems to remain. The only collection known to have existed and survived is Goldney's, now at the Wiltshire Records Office. The nearest to a political diary of a backbench Tory M.P. during the period is probably W.B.Ferrand's but he was only in the 1865 House until 1866 and he never represented a northern manufacturing or commercial constituency.

¹⁹ Derby's private secretary wrote to him:

"...you should hold a meeting of the Party in Downing St. as soon as practicable, and that Stanley should then and there speak out as to Lord Derby's wishes in yr. favour". Barrington to Disraeli, White's Club note paper, February 25th, 1868, H.P. Box 41/1, Ref. B/IX/F/17.

²⁰ Barrington tried again the next day:

"...it wd. give the greatest satisfaction to the party if you were to propose to Gen. Peel and Lord Cranborne to join you-they would refuse...Ld. Hylton would be the man to "get at" Peel". Ibid. February 26th, 1868, Ref. B/IX/F/21. For Cranborne, see A. Roberts: "Salisbury, Victorian Titan", 1999 and D. Steele: "Lord Salisbury: A Political Biography", 1999.

²¹ Disraeli to Corry, November 29th, 1867, H.P., Box 95/1, Ref. B/XX/D/59.

Tory backbenches. A Northamptonshire squire of ancient lineage, he owed his rapid promotion to the Chancellorship entirely to Disraeli but his social position and physical presence saved him from being regarded as a mere creature. He had no claims to be leader, either in 1867-8 or in 1871, unlike the rest of Disraeli's senior colleagues and was linked neither with the Stanley faction on the party left nor the "Cave" on the right.

Whether or not the Reform Bill was to pass at all in 1867, in whatever shape and form, depended upon an odd combination of Disraeli's hold on the Commons, the internal machinations of the Tory party, a coherent body of Radicals sticking with him and the health of both Conservative leaders holding up for long enough to get through the session. For his part Disraeli was already a creaking gate by 1866 and, in some senses, the battle of the party succession had already commenced. For Derby, although ailing and sometimes absent, there is little hint before the final crisis at the beginning of 1868 that he would have to step down. He was the guest of honour and principal speaker at the great Conservative banquet at Manchester on October 17th, 1867, the purpose of which was to extol and commend the Reform Act.²² During the celebrations the Prime Minister committed himself to continuing in office until the holding of the anticipated general election in 1868. There had been previous examples of dressing gown Prime Ministers and Derby's London home in St. James's Square was very convenient for Disraeli to drop into on his way to the Commons. These meetings and discussions indicated the important role played by the Prime Minister.²³ Such visits, and they were frequent, usually took place at mid-day and lasted about an hour.²⁴ The only period throughout Derby's third premiership of approximately twenty months, when Disraeli was in the semi-dark about affairs, was during his illness in the last week of November and the first week of December in 1867. This cut across two

²² See W. Pollard: "The Stanleys of Knowsley", 1868.

²³ Much of the historiography and most contemporary writing ascribed all that happened to Disraeli:

"...I should ask you to be kind enough to write a note to Ld. Derby, you being so all-powerful with him". Lord George Gordon-Lennox to Disraeli, December 13th, 1866, H.P., Box 134/1, Ref. B/XXI/Lx./131.

²⁴ However, they could take place elsewhere:

"...what with the real Cabinet of Thursday, with Derby alone, and the Burlesques of today". Disraeli to Lord Henry Gordon-Lennox, n.d., Newmarket, H.P., Box 102/4, Ref. B/XX/Lx./330.

meetings of the Cabinet and he relied upon Stanley to let him know what took place.²⁵

Elderly Prime Ministers, often in the Lords, with brilliant deputies in the Commons, were two-a'-penny in early and mid-Victorian Britain. Wellington and Peel, Melbourne and Russell, Palmerston and Gladstone and Russell and Gladstone all showed what might be achieved with a part time premier. However, it was by no means inconceivable that Disraeli might have to go first: too Machiavellian a view of the sequence of events was mistaken. He was very poorly in December 1867 and was absent from Cabinet. If he had not become Prime Minister in 1868 he would never have done so later, as he would have been too old. Another election defeat in 1868-9, following the new settlement of 1867-8 for which Disraeli would have been responsible, would be the end of the road. Having, rather fortuitously, become Prime Minister in 1868, by the choice of the Queen alone, his position was saved. She could have chosen otherwise and perhaps should have pressed Derby to make no unnecessarily hasten decision, awaiting an upturn in his health. Losing as the Premier gave Disraeli a certain status and aura which his rivals did not possess. The Queen liked him and let this be known, which was important to a political party half of whose M.P.s, at least, had served in her Army, with a large number seeing that service in the Crimea. When a challenge did finally materialise in 1871, Cairns was too remote, Derby too scared, Hardy too irascible, Northcote too pure and Salisbury too extreme. By-election successes starting in late 1870, some of them attributable in a rather vague and existential way to the 1867-8 Acts changed the whole picture, including the extraordinary, and widely commented upon, success in East Surrey (Greater Croydon) in August 1871. Disraeli in 1867-8, therefore, was in a half way house. He had obviously shed the maverick image of 1846 but in 1867 he was still somewhere between the brilliant but distrusted leader of the 1850s and early 1860s and the dominant figure he became between 1874-8. The great Act of 1867 made him Prime Minister in 1868; the one was dependent on the other. Redistribution was a parliamentary battle. In 1866 the Tory requirement was to defeat the Liberal plans. Between 1867-8 a minority Conservative Government

²⁵ Disraeli wrote to his secretary:

“There is a Cabinet today at 4 o’cl[ock]. Ask Ld. Barrington who calls it”. Disraeli to Corry, November 28th, 1867, H.P., Box 95/1, Ref. B/XX/D/58.

proposed and, to some extent, a majority Liberal Commons imposed. The interface where the two forces met determined the eventual fate of the question. There was little, if any, extra-parliamentary pressure over the question in general terms. “Bright and Liberty” made sense as a Radical logo; “Gladstone and Grouping” did not. However, once the franchise question was settled, there was much party, public and local interest over the related questions of where the new boroughs would be located, what their boundaries might be, which counties were to be divided, how this was to be achieved and in what ways the boundaries of the old boroughs were to be altered. Disraeli won the parliamentary battle in 1866-7 but partly lost control of matters at the end of April 1868.

Gladstone’s three years between 1866-8 were almost as peculiar as Disraeli’s. He lost the 1866 Bill by his inept leadership of the Commons, presumably not deliberately, split his party for the first but not the last time in 1867 and then regained some control both of the Commons and of his party in 1868. His views on parliamentary reform in this period are almost impossible to summarise in any coherent fashion. He favoured a limited extension of the franchise, held a messianic concern for the compound householders, disliked the secret ballot and had an aversion to cumulative voting. Yet, he also had a desire for a much wider and broader measure of redistribution, when in 1859 he had gone out on a limb and voted against his party over the question of the small boroughs and their retention. The traditional view of Gladstone in 1867 has been of a leader sulking in the background, leaving the running to others. There is some truth in this view: there were no amendments in his name after April and there is no collection of great speeches on “Reform”.²⁶ Nevertheless, this view is only partly true. He was not quite Ajax for the 1867 session but he was not Achilles either. Disraeli was entirely suited to the character of Agamemnon.²⁷ It was quite clear whom he still regarded as being the Liberal leader, even though it was very much in Disraeli’s

²⁶ Stanley commented:

“Gladstone spoke with great bitterness, and (oddly enough) early in the evening, about dinnertime: as if he had meant to show that he did not claim the right of a leader, to close the debate on his side”. Stanley Journal, op. cit., May 9th, 1867 [the debate was on Hibbert’s Amendment to the Reform Bill]. Out of twenty-six divisions taken during the Committee Stage of the Reform Bill, from May 2nd – July 9th, 1867, Gladstone voted against the Government on eighteen of them.

²⁷ The periodicals portrayed him as all sorts of things in 1867: Blondin, the conductor of the band, the dance-master on eggshells, the dishonest pot-boy, Mephistopheles and the wandering Jew are a representative cross-section. “Punch” portrayed Gladstone as Disraeli’s telescope.

interest to play up his great opponent's role. Gladstone found it very difficult to contain his anger at his rival's success, mastery of the Commons and elevation, before himself, to the premiership. As a Lancashire M.P. he had a personal interest in redistribution and a deep understanding of the issues involved, though not necessarily of the people so affected.²⁸ However, his authority throughout 1867-8 was seriously compromised by his inability to control the 45 Radicals who acted independently of his leadership from April 1867 until a year later. Whilst Bright remained loyal, London Radicals, such as Ayrton and Torrens, did not want to see more seats for the regions at the capital's expense.

The "Kitchen Cabinet"

Disraeli, and to a lesser extent Derby, were informed over the whole question of Parliamentary Reform by a very small group of advisers and officials. The balance of responsibility for the spadework undertaken shifted according to the state of Derby's health, whether or not the Commons was sitting, the changes that took place within the Cabinet, the personnel serving Disraeli, particularly his secretaries, and the distinction to be drawn between government and opposition. Derby's health problems meant that day to day understanding and control of parliamentary business lay with Disraeli, especially during 1867. The Commons did not have to deal with a Conservative reform measure in 1866 and by 1868 Derby was gone. Frantic research and preparatory work had to be undertaken when the session was on and this shifted responsibility, if not power, from St. James's Square to 11, Downing Street and Disraeli's office at the Commons. Although no Cabinet minister or department approached Disraeli's in terms of authority for the 1867-8 measures, the elevation of Hardy to be Home Secretary added an extra dimension to the workings of government. To take two small examples: his diary records seeing Derby to discuss redistribution and the Boundary Commission report went to Hardy as Home Secretary and not to

²⁸ He argued in favour of additional M.P.s for South Lancashire either by sub-dividing the huge constituency, or by making it the City of London of the north and giving it four Members. He also wanted an extra one for Salford.

Disraeli as Chancellor, though the latter was responsible both for its make-up and membership.²⁹

Disraeli's change of secretary from Earle to Corry was wholly beneficial: Corry was a better secretary, though he was not brilliant administratively, and trustworthy. For Disraeli, not wholly trusted at the best of times, to have a duplicitous private secretary was unwise. The change in the autumn of 1866 enhanced his party authority and helped his position in the Commons. During the period of opposition to Liberal reform and future planning in the remainder of 1866 after coming to power, Derby and Disraeli were advised principally by Dudley Baxter, a partner in Sir Philip Rose's law firm. This advice was a mixture of statistics, the probable effect of both franchise proposals on individual constituencies and various possibilities with regard to redistribution. Once actual bills had to be drafted then officials and civil servants played a greater, and conflicting, role. The two key government employees were Lambert and Thring. The Chief Whip, Colonel Taylor, then reported as to how particular proposals were likely to be supported, or received, on the Conservative side of the House. Disraeli also received party advice from Markham Spofforth who was the principal party agent. The more informal nature of government took place both outside Parliament and London. Apart from collapsing after the session and feeding his peacocks at Hughenden, Disraeli did little when Parliament was not sitting, apart from the necessary chore of country house visiting at the appropriate time of year. He received visitors and Corry was a frequent guest.³⁰ However, he was not yet the general factotum that he was to become in the 1870s. His visits were usually fairly brief and were part social and part business. He would bring papers with him, receive instructions as to what to research and who to see, relate news and gossip and set up future interviews, usually of a bilateral nature.

Baxter's memoranda went either to Hughenden or Downing Street and usually came from his firm's offices in Victoria Street, Westminster. His great passions, when relaxing, were for figures and engineering. Baxter's statistical interests were wide ranging, as can be seen by his list of publications. His most important work for Disraeli was the analysis he made of both the electoral returns and the Liberal

²⁹ "Yesterday with Lord Derby on distribution of seats at 12..." Hardy Diary, op. cit., Wednesday, June 5th, 1867.

³⁰ A visitors' book for the 1866-8 period has not yet seen the light of day.

redistribution proposals in 1866 and the details on the various franchise and constituency proposals that were put to him in 1867. Baxter's expertise was acknowledged; a Tory statistician and electoral expert in 1866-7 was unusual.³¹ He utilised, as a basis for his own analyses, the earlier work of William Newmarch whose statistics had been of value in the 1859 Reform Bill.³² A separate channel of advice was provided by Dr. Grey who had also assisted with matters in 1859.³³

Baxter was on the evangelical wing of the party, was a temperance reformer and had links with Shaftesbury.³⁴ The Conservatives' plans were complicated by Baxter's absence during the winter of 1866-7 when he went to Hong Kong. His daughter, who had set up a missionary school there, had died and Baxter went out to see if the school could continue, as well as for more personal reasons. Rose explained what this meant:

"I am satisfied from my knowledge of Mr. Baxter's character that nothing...will stop his proposal [of going to Hong Kong], which will entail a painful disruption of our firm and put a n end to our political position as both [his father and Spofforth] must at once be put into his work to try and keep matters together".³⁵

Rose's firm already faced difficulties to do with its commercial, rather than its political, work. The time it had spent drafting, and miswriting, the London, Chatham and Dover Railway Bill had led to financial problems.³⁶

On his return Baxter was immediately plunged into a turf war with Thring in March 1867 as to who should have responsibility for the actual drafting of the Reform Bill.³⁷ Baxter lost that battle and then penned his side of matters to

³¹ "I saw a letter of yours to Spofforth about returns. Dudley Baxter has worked these up very carefully and is so completely master of all details..." Rose to Disraeli, April 10th, 1866, H.P., Box 308/2, Ref. R/I/B/103.

³² Journal of the Statistical Society of London, 1857 and 1859 collections, H.P., Box 44/2, Ref. B/XI/E/2 and W.Macrosty: "Annals of the Royal Statistical Society, 1834-1934", 1934.

³³ "Dr. Grey, who you will remember was very useful in preparing statistics for your Reform Bill in 1859..." Spofforth to Disraeli, April 11th, 1866, H.P., Box 143/2, Ref. B/XXI/S/413.

³⁴ Earle, when still Disraeli's secretary, wrote:

"It is a great pity I did not know that the overture was going to be made to Shaftesbury- I would have prepared him thro' Baxter". Earle to Disraeli, n.d. but probably June 1866, H.P., Box 97/2, Ref. B/XX/E/373.

³⁵ Rose to Disraeli, October 26th, 1866, H.P., Box 308/2, Ref. R/I/B/106a.

³⁶ Sir Henry Drummond Wolff was involved in trying to help the situation for the firm.

³⁷ Derby wrote:

Disraeli before effectively resigning.³⁸ Reading between the lines, the clear implication was that Baxter wanted a more advantageous Bill to the party and Thring wished to play safe. However, Baxter continued to work with Lambert in trying to chart a course through the jungle of rating and in writing papers on other reform issues so clearly some sort of *modus vivendi* was arrived at between the official Government draftsman and the unofficial party and political adviser.³⁹ One such request which must serve as an example went:

“I want a paper on cumulative voting, representation of the minorities (against the system) that appeared in [the] *Sat[urda]y. Rev[iew]*. (a few weeks ago) for a friend in the *H[ouse]. of Lords*”.⁴⁰

After the 1868 General Election, Baxter wrote a detailed analysis, the purpose of which was to try and show that Disraeli had not been completely incompetent in 1867-8. Baxter’s last political involvement with the party was when he declined an invitation to stand with W.H.Smith for Westminster in 1874.⁴¹ He cited his views on temperance reform as being too much of a handicap for such a constituency. On the surface such a missed opportunity looked rather odd for a relatively young and committed party activist, a key member of the Leader’s backroom staff, especially in the archetypal metropolitan seat that swung to the Tories so markedly from 1870 onwards. It was also just a stone’s throw from his

“What have you done re Thring v. Baxter? It is very unfortunate, for [Thring] has done all the work, and [Baxter] has all the real knowledge and experience on his side. But if Baxter refuses to communicate with Thring, I do not see on what ground we can support him. Thring is a very safe man, a good draftsman and a fair politician and...he is employed on all other Government Bills”. Derby to Disraeli, March 14th, 1867, H.P., Box 110/3, Ref. B/XX/S/421.

³⁸ He wrote:

“Allow me to explain that in my interview with Mr. Thring in the presence of Mr. Corry I found him determined to remodel the Bill, and animated by no conciliatory spirit towards myself, so that it was hopeless to think of our being able to act together.

Mr. Rose and my father...were thoroughly agreed with me.

I only hope that the Government may not find their [sic.] Bill completed on principles at variance with those on which it has been drawn, and not in harmony with the wants and wishes of the Conservative party.

...until today no intimation was given of the least desire to subordinate me to any officer in carrying it out.

In retiring altogether from the service of the Government as regards the question of Reform...”Baxter to Disraeli, March 14th, 1867, H.P., Box 47/1, Ref. B/XI/J/89.

³⁹ The rather vexed relationship between Sir Humphrey Appleby and Mrs. Dorothy Wainwright, the official and party advisers respectively to Prime Minister Hacker comes to mind.

⁴⁰ Quite who the friend was is unclear but one assumes Cairns. Disraeli to Corry, July 26th, 1868, H.P., Box 95/1, ref. B/XX/D/42.

⁴¹ For a similar, and slightly earlier, refusal, see the chapter on East Anglia.

Hampstead home. Whether he already knew of his health problems is impossible to say. He died of heart disease in 1875.⁴²

The views formulated by Baxter on redistribution in 1866 were, in most respects, the ones adopted by the Conservatives in 1867-8. He argued that size of population of seat did matter with 5,000 being an important marker: at that figure and under Tory fortunes were strong; over it matters became more problematical. As a very rough guide, the higher the level of population, the less well the party was placed. According to Baxter this principle applied to both represented and unrepresented towns and boroughs. This belief explained why the party held to the slightly odd defence of the small boroughs, which was current throughout the debates and changes of 1867-8. As with any Disraelian belief, it was flexibly interpreted but it was fairly strongly held. Over the county franchise, which was so much more important a Tory topic than its borough equivalent, Baxter argued that a £14 occupation vote, down from £50 (the famous Chandos clause), from 1832, would not be detrimental to the party's interest and would help to counteract the radical tendencies of the 40/- freeholders, who, for the most part, voted in the counties even though they lived within the boundaries of existing boroughs.⁴³ He also advocated an enlargement of the borough boundaries. This was necessary in a general sense in those Midlands and Northern counties, such as Staffordshire and Lancashire, where the settlement had been clearly gerrymandered by the Whigs in 1832.⁴⁴ He regarded the key party question as

⁴² There is a touching, largely non-political memoir written for private circulation by his wife in 1878; see Mrs. Mary D. Baxter: "Robert Dudley Baxter", 1878.

⁴³ He wrote:

"...we are likely to be more strengthened by the rural 2/3rds of the £14-20 franchise than weakened by the town 1/3rd. Again, the 40/- freeholders have 25% of owners living in £2-5 houses- lower than anything in boroughs. The £14-20 owners will be immeasurably superior and neutralise them". Baxter to Derby, June 12th, 1866, H.P., Box 44/1, Ref. B/XI/D/74.

Even an expert such as Baxter, was faced with a leap in the dark, however meticulous and thorough the research undertaken, when faced with the key question as to how the new borough electorate would actually vote. He briefed Derby as follows:

: "Whether the Working Classes in these boroughs [i.e. the 74 boroughs with a population below 10,000] would be Conservative or Liberal, nobody knows. But every agent I have seen says that they would be highly venal, and that douceurs and beer barrels would be the indispensable requisites of success. I am afraid Royal Commissions and disfranchisements would be correspondingly frequent". Baxter to Derby, February 28th, 1867, H.P., Box 47/1, Ref. B/XI/J/74.

⁴⁴ Baxter mentioned Huddersfield and Rochdale as two such classic examples and advised:

"Our agents in large boroughs all say that enlargement to include part of the country[side] will be a double advantage to us, first by modifying the deeper Radicalism of the present constituencies and, secondly, by taking a large number of town voters out of the counties. The small boroughs vary in opinion, but generally the same view is held, especially in boroughs now Radical". Baxter to Disraeli, April 10th, 1866, H.P., Box 44/1, Ref. B/XI/D/18.

being increased representation for the counties and set out his priorities as follows:

“I sh[oul]d. put the order of importance:

- 1) More members for counties
- 2) Borough freeholders to vote for Boroughs...
- 3) Grouping.

No doubt if all unrepresented towns could be grouped with the existing Boroughs, it w[oul]d. be very important. But such a scheme would be gigantic from the mass of details involved, and the wholesale changes.

The means possible for giving more members to counties would...be to throw surrounding rural districts into a large number of Boroughs, on the model of East Retford...Bassetlaw and new Shoreham. Thus you would expand these and a few other boroughs similar in character but smaller in area, into a new class of Borough-County constituencies, breaking the present uniformity.

Would not a body of old Whigs and Adullamites join in any feasible scheme for enlarging county representation? It seems to be our strongest card”.⁴⁵

Such ideas were pragmatically, rather than inflexibly, held, as they had to be, given the parliamentary arithmetic after the 1865 General Election. Even grouping depended on who was doing it and where it would be.⁴⁶ Baxter thoroughly investigated the effect of the Liberal plans in 1866 and this knowledge allowed Disraeli to work with Hayter and the threatened Whigs in opposing Gladstone’s proposals.

Baxter’s schemes for increased county representation had been tabled by Russell, in a slightly different format, in 1854 and were to be forwarded by Laing in 1867 but, oddly, not by Disraeli. As he obviously wanted to give more seats to counties but refrained from making a sweeping proposal to that effect in 1867, Disraeli had come to the conclusion that such a measure would not get through the Commons, in part due to what had happened in 1866. He could not afford to lose his Radical

⁴⁵ Baxter to Disraeli, n.d. but written on a “Saturday evening” from “The Oaks”, Hampstead, Baxter’s home, H.P., Box 47/2, Ref. B?XI/J/190. The abolition of the strict borough-county divide had to wait for the next generation in 1885.

⁴⁶ The party agent wrote:

“...there must be no general rule for the boroughs...like the system of grouping. Each Borough must be dealt with separately on its own merits...It would be wise...to take the view of the leading men of each Borough as to extension of Boundaries”. Spofforth to Disraeli, October 18th, 1866, H.P., Box 143/2, Ref. B/XXI/S/416.

friends over too generous a settlement to the counties in 1867, having already lost his Whig allies from 1866 over the failure of “fusion” and the household suffrage increases.

Baxter’s and Spofforth’s researches gave Disraeli the tactical information that was necessary in formulating Conservative plans in 1866-7. What it could not do was to provide the answer to the strategic dilemma, which was whether he should aim to stay in power for as long as possible, or to go, instead, for as partisan a settlement as he could get away with. The first option provided office, though always on sufferance, the possible ability to sway public opinion and the chance that something would turn up, perhaps a foreign policy success or a Liberal sundering, that would prolong Tory rule. The second would, in all likelihood, provoke an early election but one that might well be fought on a Conservative agenda with lots of new, potentially Tory seats and with a new and wholly untested franchise. Inevitably, what emerged was something of a compromise but in essence Disraeli went for the first option and played things by ear.

Initially, in 1866, Disraeli’s secretary was Earle. As an M.P. he had unrivalled access to his colleagues, both in the Commons and at the Carlton Club, where many M.P.s dined but it could not fully recompense for deficiencies of character.⁴⁷ Having left Disraeli’s service in autumn 1866, Earle subsequently left the Government’s in spring 1867. In theory, he resigned over the Reform Bill arguing that it was too radical.⁴⁸ In practice, he left in high dudgeon due to jealousy of Corry and an unrequited, and unjustified, sense of his own virtues. Earle criticised Disraeli in the Commons in April 1867, intending to expose his hypocrisy.⁴⁹ His loss was not felt, except in helping to turn Maldon into the most

⁴⁷ Hardy, who admittedly did not often say nice things about other people in his Diary and who was in the anti-Disraeli camp in 1866, had this to say of Earle:

“If I am unfairly used [about office] I shall attribute it to Disraeli & I believe I owe to his jackal Mr. E[a]rle the paragraph in the [Morning] Post wh[ich]. makes me Judge Advocate”. Hardy Diary, op.cit. Tuesday, July 3rd, 1866.

⁴⁸ Hardy wrote:

Earle has written to inform me that he has left the Poor Law Board on the ground that he cannot support the policy of the Government on the reform question”. Hardy to Disraeli, March 15th, 1867, H.P., Box 98/3, Ref. B/XX/Ha./4.

⁴⁹ He said:

“...were they to say with the Chancellor...that popular privileges were not democratic rights, or that household suffrage was a fancy franchise?”. Parl. Deb., 3, vol. 186, col. 1574, (18th March-3rd May 1867).

Disraeli’s friend Beauchamp commented:

“I thoroughly enter into your feelings about Earle. His conduct has bewildered me, and it is no satisfaction that his ingratitude to you has not only injured his prospects now but excited a

anti-Disraeli constituency in the whole country: the other Tory M.P. being Sandford Peacocke.⁵⁰

His replacement Corry was a much better, more approachable secretary, a great mollifier whose role in 1867-8 was important.⁵¹ He helped to improve Disraeli's rapport with the parliamentary party and frequently advised him to find time to speak to individual M.P.s about their concerns over the Government's Reform policy. Corry was not Disraeli's only link with the backbenches. The Wiltshire squire Richard Long acted as his eyes and ears and linked the work of the secretariat with the feelings of the party. He reported:

"Over 120 present...Sir M.[White] Ridley in the chair...Speakers amenable to household suffrage with checks, as against £5...It was strongly felt that...Bill...should be made by Govt. not accepted from opponents. And household suffrage, thus protected, especially with the power of cumulative voting, was urged as a Conservative measure, on the grounds that it offered the best means of resisting farther and wider change.

All boroughs below 10,000 to lose one Member- but no total disfranchisement. If all below 20,000 only kept 1 Member, and these were given to growing centres of population, and to Counties with the cumulative vote- it would be a large and definite measure...there is no other magic than "round numbers" in 10,000 or 20,000.

Also, an early interchange of confidential communication between Gov[ernmen]t. and their party is desirable.

Good feeling generally towards Ld. Derby and Mr. Disraeli as representing the progressive element in the Cabinet".⁵²

very strong feeling against him even out of political circles, against which he will probably find it hard to contend". Frederick Lygon, 6th Earl Beauchamp to Disraeli, April 27th, 1867, H.P., Box 101/4, Ref. B/XX/Ln./54.

⁵⁰ Earle's subsequent doings are outlined in pp.468-9 of Blake, op.cit., [ppb. version]. His papers were presumed destroyed on his death.

⁵¹ Although there is no political biography as such, there is a study of Corry as Disraeli's secretary by W.J.Jordan, when a Bristol University undergraduate. The photographs are excellent and the memorabilia on which the study is based were held by Prince Loewenstein of Richmond, Surrey. Access to the collection is via the National Register of Archives. Corry's political role and life is best approached via the Hughenden Papers.

⁵² Richard P. Long to Disraeli, undated, 11, Downing Street notepaper, H.P., Box 47/3, Ref. B/XI/I/205.

However, there still one further area of difficulty which surfaced over the 1868 General Election. Rose was removed by Disraeli in July from the party's Election Committee.⁵³ Spofforth followed out of the door soon afterwards.⁵⁴

The "Kitchen Cabinet", therefore, played a key role in the events of 1866-8. It was not the Prime Minister's creation but the Chancellor's. Nevertheless, Derby was more than aware of its somewhat shadowy existence and was also partially involved in its doings. It played an important role in advising him in the second half of 1866 and in the early part of 1867, when some Cabinet persuasion, party explanation and legislative preparation was necessary, before Disraeli took over matters in the Commons in March-April 1867.

Its membership was small and fluid. No one person served continuously from mid-1866 until late 1868. There were clearly difficult internal tensions. Baxter and Corry were the most important and interesting individuals, because they were both admixtures of non-ambitious politician, adviser, bureaucrat, factotum and, for Disraeli, relatively young men. Corry was, also, man about town. Lambert, especially, and Thring were the key civil servants. Earle, Rose and Spofforth were de facto participants. Taylor, as Chief Whip, and therefore primarily loyal to Derby until February 1868, was not really a member. Whether they all ever met as a formal group was very unlikely as there was little need to do so.

As a body, it offered Disraeli what the formal Cabinet could not. He relied upon it in a way that was not possible with his senior colleagues. It allowed Disraeli to analyse the whole field of Reform and Redistribution with clarity and precision and prepared him well for the rigours of the parliamentary debates and manoeuvrings, on a daily basis. Its existence, if somewhat nebulous as it undoubtedly was, helps to explain why the actual Cabinet left much of the detail to Disraeli, particularly over Redistribution, and why the published diaries are so thin on the matter. The actual Tory Cabinets of 1866-8, in their dual roles as

⁵³ He wrote:

"I did not go to the Election Committee on Monday in consequence of a letter from Corry requesting me not to do so until I heard from you again...I dare say I am objectionable to some members of the Committee and thought useless by all...better that I should render what little service I can, independent of the Committee". Rose to Disraeli, July 11th, 1868, H.P., Box 108/2, Ref. B/XX/R/28.

⁵⁴ Derby commented:

"You will have done good service in ousting Spofforth from the management of the Elections...I believe he was honest, though with a leaning towards Railway Directors...but he was anything but judicious in the choice of candidates, and disposed to meddle when he had better have left things alone". Derby to Disraeli, August 2nd, 1868, H.P., Box 110/3, Ref. B/XX/S/498.

executive and politically representative bodies, were immensely superior both to the “Who? Who?” administration of 1852 and the Government of 1858-9. However, it was still rather wooden, too aristocratic, and overly dominated by grand Tory families and somewhat ignorant of electoral detail, except perhaps for individual territorial areas, especially with the sad loss of Cranborne in February 1867. Without the “Kitchen Cabinet” to guide him, Disraeli would have found it very difficult to master the Commons in 1867 by atomising the Liberals and the great Act of that year might well not have been passed.

CHAPTER 3: DERBY AND THE “INNER CABINET”.

The Prime Minister (until February 1868) has received rather less coverage over Reform in general and Redistribution in particular than the Chancellor. There is no extant modern biography of Derby's career and he lacks the sheer timelessness of his more famous colleague.¹ His salad days were really of the previous political generation. He first entered the Commons in 1822 and served for four years in the Whig Cabinets of 1830-4 and then for the same period under Peel from 1841-5. For most of the next twenty years he was in opposition, either to his own party or to the Whig/Liberal majority that dominated the years from 1846-66. From 1830-45 Derby was rather overshadowed by Melbourne and Peel and from 1846 onwards he took second place to Palmerston and Disraeli. He became the 14th Earl in 1851. For the great majority of the years of opposition, therefore, Derby was in the Lords and this meant that he was overly reliant on the party leader in the Commons. There followed two brief and rather inconclusive periods of power in 1852 and 1858-9, before the great swan-song of 1866-8. Derby's letters to Disraeli are models of clarity and exposition and show a mastery of the whole range of issues concerning mid-nineteenth century government. His lucid understanding and subsequent exposition of the major prime ministerial responsibilities of defence, diplomacy, foreign affairs and, possibly, finance (pre-Gladstone as Chancellor) were worthy of most careful attention, which they received from Disraeli. Derby's comments about people and politicians are also pertinent, worthwhile and interesting but they lack the sparkle of his extraordinary partner.²

Following the election defeat of 1865 Derby was not expecting, nor had he prepared for, a further opportunity of governing. Once the Liberal coalition had imploded in June 1866, he took his chance. He rejected the offered terms of “fusion” as really meaning Whig domination and he could not abide the Adullamite view of Church questions. Not only did he provide the impetus for the

¹ At the time of writing Dr. Angus Hawkins is well advanced on his biography. The best, modern, brief study is his article “Lord Derby” in R.W.Davis, editor: “Lords of Parliament: Studies, 1714-1914”, 1995.

² Unlike his eldest son there is no known private diary. This makes Derby's movements more difficult to follow. In addition, Disraeli kept in almost daily, certainly weekly, contact with his secretary and Corry's papers, so far as they have a separate existence, form an integral part of the Disraeli archive. This is not the case with Derby and Barrington.

Tories re-entering office, he also did the same in deciding to take up the Reform issue against the wishes of an initially hesitant Disraeli. Responsibility to the party, loyalty to the Queen, the bitter disappointment of 1865, the opportunity to avenge himself upon the Whigs and the gambler's last throw of the dice, all of these were factors in his personal equation. He could, perhaps, afford to take a slightly more relaxed view of the situation: he had no hostile Commons to contend with, no Gladstone or Roundell Palmer to debate and a safe Tory majority in the Lords. Initial ideas as to what to do were discussed in Cabinet but, more importantly, on a bilateral basis with Disraeli during the summer and autumn of 1866. He encouraged boldness and audacity and had a clear understanding of the issues involved.³ Derby accepted that a Tory reform Bill would inevitably create party difficulties, perhaps divisions, but this was a risk that he was prepared to take. Two ministers had resigned on the issue in 1859 (Henley and Walpole); three were to do so in 1867 (Carnarvon, Cranborne and Peel). Such disloyalty made Derby quite happy to divulge his thoughts on dissenting ministers to Disraeli.⁴

Derby happily concurred with Disraeli's view that the electoral system, as created in 1832, was a fix. He was clearly in a grand position to know as he had been an important member of the government, as Irish Chief Secretary, which had created it. Derby was quite prepared to alter the future make-up and balance of the constituencies and he questioned whether the interests of the Tory party were best served, by a somewhat slavish devotion to the maintenance of the small boroughs. The accepted political wisdom of the day was that the smaller the borough population, the more Tory its politics were likely to be. He realised that this was

³ Rose had written to Disraeli:

"I had my first Reform interview with Lord Derby yesterday. It lasted for nearly three hours and I came away quite convinced that no one ought to venture to talk to Lord Derby who does not thoroughly understand his subject". Sir Philip Rose to Disraeli, August 12th, 1858, H.P., Box 307/1, Ref. R/I/B/43a.

⁴ On the Peel family in general, he wrote:

"...on the subject of our new member for Tamworth [Sir Robert Peel's son]...a very slippery gentleman, like most of the Peelites..." Derby to Disraeli, November 5th, 1863, H.P., Box 110/2, Ref. B/XX/S/317.

On Walpole, who was the only Cabinet minister to resign twice from a Derby Government, he commented:

"...I do not think the public would regard with satisfaction the appointment of Walpole as Minister of Education. He was originally estimated too high, and his undeniable failure has probably had the effect of unduly lowering him in public opinion. Nor do I think that he will ever again occupy any responsible office". Derby to Disraeli, January 11th, 1868, H.P., Box 110/3, Ref. B/XX/S/471.

not necessarily the case. It would depend, in part, on the question of definition. Any borough with a population between 5,000 and 10,000 might be regarded as small. Derby, also, fully understood that the key question was not so much where disfranchisement took place, nor necessarily what the level of population was to be but where enfranchisement was to take place. If, for instance, a population level of 10,000 was set at which constituencies were to be disfranchised completely, the comparable 1832 figure being 2,000, then there were all sorts of interesting possibilities as to how such seats were to be reallocated. In total, 130 boroughs in England and Wales, after 1832, returned two M.P.s. From number 89 on the list, Windsor, population (1861) 9,596 to number 130, Honiton, population 3,427, there were forty-two constituencies returning eighty-four M.P.s.⁵ There were, also, sixty-eight, post-1832 boroughs, returning one M.P. each. From number 37 on the list, Haverfordwest, population 9,729 to number 68, Arundel, population 2,748, there were another thirty-two seats. This gave a combined total of 116 seats. If all of these M.P.s went to London, Scotland and the large, industrial towns of the Midlands and the North, then there was no point in doing it. However, if they all went to the seriously under-represented counties, then Derby was greatly in favour. These permutations had been thoroughly investigated in 1859, as had been other ways of looking at possible enfranchisement.⁶

Derby's approach to these speculations was coloured by the language and tactics of horse racing. His friends tended to be of the previous generation, such as Lord Exeter, who died in 1867, or the Earl of Malmesbury, who deputised for him in the Lords and were most likely to be either elderly peers, or racing types, or both.⁷ Derby shared with Gladstone the fact that he had few political friends. Sometimes, the gambles paid off: the appointment of Stanley as Foreign Secretary in 1866 turned out to be a very successful one, even though it was made, in part, to keep him both quiet and occupied. It was also a tacit acknowledgement by Derby that,

⁵ The list includes Totnes, writ suspended 1865, disfranchised 1868.

⁶ His son had written:

"By our statistics of 1859, there are 62 boroughs having two members each, which have electors fewer than 1,000. A partial disfranchisement, not extinguishing any borough, but taking away one of its two members, would give from these, 62 seats disposable. And this was about the extent of disfranchisement at first contemplated by Lord D's government". Stanley Diary, op. cit., February 14th, 1861.

⁷ Brownlow (Cecil), 3rd Marquess of Exeter; 1795-1867; succ. 1804; court office 1841-6, 1852 and 1858-9.

at some not too distant stage, the younger generation of Conservatives would have to take over from himself and Disraeli.

Derby was not by nature a particularly sociable party leader and, by and large, he eschewed holding grand dinner parties. Disraeli regarded their absence as a serious weakness in a party leader. Derby preferred leading by appeals to party loyalty, by the power of oratory and argument, by his own aura of longevity and personal example, rather than by flattery, bribery, bonhomie and excessive patronage. His resignation honours list in February 1868 rather emphasised the point: it was neither a great, nor a long, collection but it was loyal.⁸

Derby had not only come to the negative conclusion that the post-1832 electoral system was fixed, he also had reached the positive one that a level of lower order enfranchisement was desirable. He agreed with Disraeli's analysis that the traditional working-class franchises, best seen in the freemen, potwalloper and scot and lot voters that existed before 1832, so loathed by the Benthamites, needed to be restored, if in a different format. As an earl he took it for granted that the working classes would vote for their natural political leaders. He was strengthened in this view by the events of the early 1860s, in particular, the Lancashire cotton famine caused by the Southern export embargo, and the Northern blockade, during the American Civil War from 1861-5. The stoicism with which the resulting suffering was faced, the lack of popular rioting and the support for the North, in Lancashire if not in London, convinced Derby of the uprightness and moral worth of the responsible working man and his subsequent fitness for the franchise. In a second way, therefore, the great Lancashire landowner shared a second similarity with Gladstone. Derby's thoughts on these matters were the genesis of "Tory Democracy", if by that is meant a rated, residential suffrage in the boroughs only.

Derby's role as Prime Minister was crucial to Disraeli during 1867. Derby excelled in those appeals to party sensibility, which was crucial in the peculiar parliamentary circumstances of that year. He was no mere fig leaf to cover Disraelian ambition but a respected and skilled leader without whom Disraeli would have struggled to have passed any sort of Reform Bill. The key meetings,

⁸ He wrote:

"I limit my recommendation[s] to three, or at most, four-Walsh, Trollope, O'Neill and perhaps Sir Brook Brydges [for peerages]..." Derby to Disraeli, February 26th, 1868, H.P., Box 41/1, Ref. B/IX/F/9.

summoned either by Whips' circulars or posted on the Carlton Club notice board, were held in February 1867. Derby's emissaries to the backbenches commented favourably on the state of party feeling, thus encouraging him to press on.⁹

Derby kept the renegades in the Lords in check, led as they were by Carnarvon. So long as the numbers remained manageable, the combination of Derby's authority and the in-built party majority kept the Tories safe. He was also able to appeal to the independent Whig peers, such as the Duke of Somerset, over the heads of the more partisan leaders. Derby's absence from the Lords usually led to difficulties because Malmesbury was a much less capable politician. He was aware of this weakness and had the sense to seek Disraeli's aid.¹⁰ Nevertheless, this did not stop him from making errors of judgment, which Hardy noted in his Diary.¹¹

Derby was well aware of the potential for the Lords to block legislation as had happened both in 1831 and 1860. He was also aware of Disraeli's complete lack of standing, influence and prestige in the Upper House. Fortunately for him, he was aided in 1867 by the Whigs' suspicions of Gladstone. Next year, the problem of control of the Lords was less acute because Gladstone's successful attack on the Irish Church at the end of April altered both political calculation and party balance. It made a speedy election a necessity and removed the need for the Lords to be used, as had been the case in 1867, as a delaying tactic by the Opposition. So much time was taken up with the Irish Church and other parliamentary business in 1868 that, by the time the secondary Reform Bills reached the Lords, they received almost a free run. These were the Boundaries, Ireland and Scotland Bills. The biggest threat to the Reform Bill in 1867 in the Lords came from Grey's wrecking Amendment, a catch all attack on the inadequacies of the redistribution settlement, which attempted to gain the support of the disenchanted and the

⁹ Derby informed Disraeli:

"My report of the Carlton meeting, brought to me by [Sir Matthew White] Ridley and B.Stanhope...there were 150 present, of whom 2/3rds were in favour of Rated Residential Suffrage, with three years residence...not accept amendments dictated by Gladstone...I think it is a strong argument in favour of meeting our fate on the bolder line; but I am afraid...that our own party will not be united". February 28th, 1867, H.P., Box 110/3, Ref. B/XX/S/412.

¹⁰ He wrote:

"Derby is ill and Halifax as the head of the Whigs threatens an attack on Monday. Cairns, too, has given one notice of Amend[ment]. so I must see you...immediately". Malmesbury to Disraeli, undated, "Friday a.m.", H.P., Box 99/2.

¹¹ "The Lords made some changes in the Reform Bill wh[ich]. may lead to delay with us especially as to the lodger. Malmesbury was rash about it. Ld. Derby's absence from the House is a real misfortune". Diary, op. cit., Tuesday, July 30th, 1867.

difficult on both sides of the House. Derby took the matter extremely seriously and made the debate effectively into a confidence motion.¹²

Derby's relationship with Disraeli may be compared very favourably with the one that had existed between Gladstone and Russell. There was, by 1867, complete personal and professional respect, though not intimacy.¹³ Both were indispensable, for different reasons, to the other. Disraeli relied on the Prime Minister's party leadership, whilst Derby understood and always supported the Chancellor in his difficulties with the Commons. He was quite happy to give Disraeli the free rein he required. Bilateral meetings often took place before Cabinet, which were not always called by Derby.¹⁴ It met either in Downing Street or at St. James's Square. Given the severe problems of spring 1867, the intensity and frequency of meetings was greatest then. Brief discussions were held by the two leaders beforehand in order to set, and to control, both agenda and outcome.¹⁵ At times of great crisis, when intentions had to be camouflaged, the Cabinet gathered elsewhere.¹⁶

Derby's movements and bouts of ill-health can be discerned and compiled, particularly for the critical year of 1867, from his letters as cross-referenced to the

¹² He wrote:

"Ld. Grey has placed his Amendment to the 2nd Reading of the Reform Bill on the table this evening. I have immediately sent out as strong a Whip as possible against it... the whole of the Opp [osition]. will support him- and he has been tampering, and, with the aid of Carnarvon, not unsuccessfully, with our people...we may be left in a minority...we should consider our course of proceeding...I should know the language which I must hold at a meeting of our party...tomorrow at 3 o'clock...What [do] you think I ought to say to our friends tomorrow? If they are led to think that Grey's success...will be fatal to the Bill, they may...carry us through- but we must then be prepared to...resign...I...see my people at 3...I hope you will call on me at the usual hour between 12 and 1- as it is essential that I should see you". Derby to Disraeli, July 18th, 1867, H.P., Box 110/3, Ref. B/XX/S/438.

¹³ Derby noted:

"I never conceal anything from you..." Derby to Disraeli, February 26th, 1867, H.P., Box 110/3, B/XX/S/411.

¹⁴ He wrote:

"If you send me a line, or will come to speak to me at the H[ouse]. of L[ords]. soon after 5, it will be time enough...Do you want a Cab[inet]. tomorrow for the Scotch Bill? If you want one, will you summon it"? Derby to Disraeli, n.d. and May 7th, 1867, H.P., Box 110/3, Ref. B/XX/S/427 and 429.

¹⁵ Derby scribbled the following:

"The Cab[inet]. is summoned...for 3...I will be in D[owning]. St[reet]. ¼ before & will see you at once..." Derby to Disraeli, February 6th, 1867, H.P., 110/3, Ref. B/XX/S/408.

¹⁶ Barrington informed Disraeli:

"Malmesbury says that it is desirable to have the Cabinet as secret as possible tomorrow, so I have suggested that it should take place here. He agrees that it will be less conspicuous than if you all go to Stratford Place. I have written to each Minister to be here at 1.0 o'clock". Hertford Street, April 10th, 1867, H.P., Box 88/3, Ref. B/XX/Ba./4.

published details in the diaries and “Hansard’s” Parliamentary Debates.¹⁷ The letters have to be treated with some care: the letter heading may not be the actual location of the letter writer. Only hand written addresses can confirm location, unless, for some unknown reason, a false address was substituted. This possibility has been discounted. During the three critical periods in the formation, creation and passage of the 1867 Reform Act, Derby was largely in harness and at his post, though there were absences from the Cabinet or the Lords or official functions, due to illness. The first, most important period was during August-September 1866, when plans were being formulated and the lack of correspondence indicated daily, or certainly frequent, meetings with Disraeli. The second was during April 1867, when it was not known if the Reform Bill was going to get through the Commons. Derby did not leave London for Knowsley during the Easter recess, though he did go to Roehampton for a short break due to its proximity to London.¹⁸ Corry wrote:

“...I have not been able to gather the sense of the Clubs on WEG’s manifesto...an attempt to rally the party, but one wh[ich]. Barrington...thinks certain to fail. In so saying, he reflects Lord Derby’s opinion, who has...been to Downing St[reet]. this afternoon”.¹⁹

His son provided confirmation of these arrangements, writing:

“Left the [Foreign] office about 5...and by road to the villa Lord D. has taken at Roehampton, where I never was till now: it is down Putney Lane, a pleasant old-fashioned house...just such a place as a man might occupy who had business in London, yet not so much as to require him to be there very early or very late...”²⁰

Finally, the third major achievement was overseeing the Bill through the Lords in July.

Derby’s health problems flared up, in a serious way, for the first time in a long while in spring 1867. Whether this was due to the taking up again of office and the inevitable stresses and strains involved is unclear. He was obviously upset by

¹⁷ Details for both Derby’s movements during his premiership and for Cabinet meetings are in an addendum to the separately bound map collection.

¹⁸ In 1867, Good Friday was on April 19th and Easter Sunday on the 21st.

¹⁹ Corry to Disraeli, April 22nd, 1867, 11 Downing Street to Hughenden, H.P., Box47/1, Ref. B/XI/J/22. The Easter recess for the Lords was from Friday, April 12th-Thursday, May 2nd; for the Commons, from Friday, April 12th-Monday, April 29th.

²⁰ Stanley Diary, op. cit., April 18th, 1867.

the Cabinet resignations in early 1867. By mid-Victorian standards Derby was elderly but not geriatric. Reading about the remedies on offer for gout inevitably leads to speculation that years of mistreatment had finally caught up with him. The most serious attacks do seem to have come just after times of great political exertion and trial but this may just be circumstantial. Derby suffered badly in both March and September 1867, with a lesser attack in July and even if the attacks themselves did not get worse, they would obviously have had both cumulative and debilitating consequences. Some attacks affected a joint or joints and were confinable but the most serious left him prostrated. The overall effect on his liver both of the illness and the medicines of the day were what seem to have laid him low. The first overt indication that Derby might feel it necessary to resign was penned to Disraeli in September 1867.²¹ Stanley commented:

“Heard that Ld. D. is again attacked by gout, and rather sharply: the result, I fear, of the inevitable attendance in the House of Lords, when not half recovered from a former illness”.²²

However, Derby recovered and took his place at Conservative rallies in both Liverpool and Manchester in the next month, something that Disraeli did not quite manage. Derby dealt with the rumours regarding his impending retirement at Manchester.²³ The necessity of an autumn session, brought about largely by the crisis in Abyssinia, involved untoward preparation and planning. It did not allow Derby that rest and recuperation necessary between sessions. This was important for him as his health was already at its worst during the winter months anyway. The melancholia and depression which affected him during the winter, due to the lack of natural light, was made worse by the attacks of gout. There was no effective treatment but medical advice, by 1868, was that it was time to go. Sadly,

²¹ Lady Derby wrote on her husband's behalf:

“I have been since Friday [September 6th]...confined to my bed, in which I am unable to turn myself without assistance, by one of the severest and most painful attacks of gout that I have had for years...my London doctors only succeeded in patching me up for the exigencies of the Session...the time cannot be far distant...when I must seek...an absolute withdrawal from the public service...” Lady Derby to Disraeli, September 10th, 1867, H.P., Box 110/3, Ref. B/XX/S/446.

A little later, she wrote:

“...he has had no real attack since March, only threatenings...” Lady Derby to Disraeli, September 25th, *ibid.* B/XX/S/524.

²² Stanley Diary, *op. cit.*, September 9th, 1867.

²³ He said:

“I have not the slightest idea of doing so. At a critical period like the present...I have no present intention of relinquishing the office”. Derby speaking at the Conservative banquet at Manchester, October 17th, 1867, quoted in “The Times” and W. Pollard *op. cit.*

Derby had reached the same conclusion.²⁴ His resignation was announced by Stanley on February 25th, 1868 and there was to be little relief even in retirement. He died on October 23rd, 1869.

When he resigned there was a ten days parliamentary break for change of offices, re-elections and considerations of policy and little, or no, dissent at Disraeli's elevation.²⁵ Derby had been an excellent chairman of the reform enterprise and his experience and wisdom were to be greatly missed in spring 1868. Disraeli's elevation from chief executive to replace him was no doubt fully merited but it caused problems of a rather different nature. It was, for instance, much easier for a reunited Liberal party rallying around the Irish Church issue and with a general election in the offing to oppose Disraeli rather than Derby, though in an odd way this also helped the cause of Conservative unity in response.

The "Inner Cabinet"

Apart from Derby and the "Kitchen Cabinet", Disraeli liaised most with an "Inner Cabinet" of four ministers, namely Cairns, Hardy, Northcote and Stanley. The rest of the formal Cabinet was either politically unexceptionable or not involved in reform and redistribution or both. They tended to be scions of great, landed families with their knowledge of electoral politics being confined to their local county, or county division and family boroughs.²⁶

Cairns was a hard-headed, but somewhat soft-hearted, able and ambitious Irish lawyer. He was first elected for Belfast in 1852, and then served as Solicitor-General in 1858-9, before becoming Attorney-General on the formation of the Tory Government in 1866. His appointment as an Appeal Court Justice in October was a severe blow to Disraeli, in particular. He had the highest regard for Cairns's ability, if not for his bravery. His loss from the Commons in 1867 was potentially

²⁴ He wrote:

"...the increasing frequency of my attacks of illness...During the past year I have hardly ever been really well". Derby to Disraeli, February 13th, 1868, H.P., Box 41/1, Ref. B/IX/F/2.

²⁵ He paid Disraeli the following tribute:

"...the courage, skill and judgement, with which you triumphantly carried the Gov[ernmen]t. through all the difficulties and dangers of last year..." Derby to Disraeli, February 19th, 1868, H.P., Box 41/1, Ref. B/IX/F/4.

²⁶ However, their help was important:

"If you could only secure my brother, the Duke of Richmond, his name and character would add greatly to the influence of the Government in England and in the North of Scotland". Lord Henry Lennox to Disraeli, July 1st, 1866, H.P., Box 102/3, Ref. B/XX/Lx./236.

fatal to the Government's chances of survival. When Disraeli became Prime Minister in 1868, apart from the elevation of Ward Hunt to the Chancellorship, the only other major alteration was the immediate replacement of Chelmsford by Cairns as Lord Chancellor.²⁷ The reasons for the change were two-fold: Disraeli's need for strengthening the Government, especially in the Lords, with the loss of Derby and Chelmsford's absurd insistence, to Disraeli's way of thinking, on not using judicial offices for party preferment: an unforgivable heresy. The new Prime Minister viewed the Church of England, the Foreign Office and the judiciary as highly political institutions and, therefore, after a generation of liberalism, in dire need of Tory infusions.²⁸ He could not abide, for one minute, the idea that purity should take precedence over patronage in the realm of party appointments. Instead of Chelmsford's outdated views on the position of the judiciary in a highly political society, Cairns offered an acute political intelligence, an understanding of complex and, to Disraeli, rather tedious and unimportant detail, over issues such as the rating question, the compound householder and the cumulative vote. He was also a moderate on the divisive, for the Tories, question of the Irish Church and was politically unthreatening.²⁹

Hardy came to occupy a pivotal role in the events of 1866-8. From an industrial, urban and northern family background, he became a lawyer and a squire and was recognisably on the centre right of the party in the Commons, with links, via religion, with the High Church "Cave". He had become M.P. for the small borough of Leominster in 1856 before moving to Oxford University in 1865. He first served in office as Walpole's protégé at the Home Office in 1858-9. He was not alone in being both anti-Disraeli and anti-Reform during the latter Palmerston

²⁷ This meant that, just as Disraeli had beaten Gladstone to the premiership, so Cairns became Lord Chancellor before his great Liberal rival, Roundell Palmer.

²⁸ Chelmsford signed his political death warrant as follows:

"I am compelled in self-defence to have it distinctly understood that I cannot suffer the smallest interference with my judicial appointments the entire responsibility of which I alone must bear". Chelmsford to Disraeli, February 20th, 1868, H.P. Box 122/3, Ref. B/XXI/C/183.

²⁹ However, there weaknesses, as pointed out by Disraeli's adviser on Catholic affairs in both Ireland and the Liberal party:

"I am delighted that you have shaken the influence of Cairns. He is absolutely under the influence of Roundell Palmer- R.P. is another Gladstone- and dangerous. [Palmer] always governed Cairns in consultations. Cairns always seemed to be afraid of him- WEG hates the HofL- and therefore Palmer hates it also- They both wish to humble it...Cairns has been mastered- and moreover he has "liberal" connexions in Belfast. Having got a bent- his natural obstinacy makes him very determined. Palmer will not let him go back. Palmer is the stronger will And WEG is behind him". Sir George Bowyer to Disraeli, July 27th and August 7th, 1874, H.P., Box 119/3, Refs. B/XXI/B/737-8.

years from 1859-65. On the Government's formation in July 1866, Hardy became secretary at the Poor Law Board. In the great crisis of January 1867, he had to reconcile two conflicting emotions: emotional sympathy and political agreement with the rebels versus personal ambition. The latter won. He became Home Secretary in May 1867, following Walpole's resignation, until the fall of the Government in December 1868. He was not very likeable but both leaders regarded Hardy highly.³⁰

He ranked third in the Commons behind Disraeli and Stanley but was more intimately involved in Reform than the latter. He bridged the gap between the county and small borough backbone of the parliamentary party, with his brother John being M.P. for Dartmouth from 1860-8 and the younger men of talent within the Cabinet. Hardy was clearly a rising star, a good speaker, was able to take on Gladstone, knew his brief and usually kept his hot temper in check. He was by no means a creature of Disraeli, retained his independence from him and was not uncritical of his Commons' leader's flexibility of tactics, plotting and seeming lack of principles. However, he also had the good sense to realise that politics was a rough trade, friendships were unnecessary and often counter-productive and that too rigid an adherence to principle would lead to powerlessness. If he had, also, resigned in January 1867, the Government might well have fallen. He also considered his position following Disraeli's odd, perhaps drunken, possibly misunderstood, acceptance of Hodgkinson's Amendment. This episode led to a frantic appeal from the chancellor to Hardy to write a letter of support, which elicited little more, at first, than a brief, rushed scribble.³¹

Hardy's promotion to Home Secretary on Walpole's resignation due to mishandling of public disorder, during the Hyde Park disturbances, though the latter remained in the Cabinet without a portfolio until February 1868, was due to intrinsic merit and loyalty. He realised that any failure to support Disraeli would likely lead to the Opposition returning to power, another Liberal Reform Bill and

³⁰ Derby commented:

"Hardy has quite vindicated our selection of him, and he has placed himself in the front rank, as a Debater..." Derby to Disraeli, n.d., H.P., Box 110/3, Ref. B/XX/S/425. The nearest to a Victorian biography is A.E.Gathorne-Hardy: "Gathorne Hardy, First Earl of Cranbrook, A Memoir", 1910.

³¹ He wrote the bare minimum:

"Mr. Hardy highly approves of last night. Have seen The Times". Hardy to Disraeli, n.d., 1867, H.P., Box 47/1, Ref. B/XI/J/53b. A rather fuller and more supportive letter followed on May 18th, 1867.

the end of his ministerial, if not political, career. As Home Secretary he was very much in the front line against Fenian rebellion and uprisings and he needed and received all the support from above that was available. He took a hard line, saw Fenianism as an insurrectionary movement that had to be defeated and was not afraid to use the death penalty in pursuit of this aim. There was an implicit trade-off. Hardy was given the authority to run the Home Office as he wanted and to take whatever steps he deemed to be necessary in the defeat of terrorism and in the restoration of the Tories' ability to combat public disorder. In return he would support Reform in 1867. The issue of concurrent endowment in Ireland, Disraeli's preference, was put to one side for the time being. The fact that Hardy subsequently led party opposition to the idea was more to do with the turn of events in April 1868 and Gladstone's seizing back of the political initiative with his resolutions for Irish Church disestablishment and disendowment. The working assumption was that he would become leader on Disraeli's retirement. When the opportunity did present itself, a decade later, matters had moved on. Gladstone had "retired", Northcote had a high reputation as both financial expert and political consensus builder, the Commons was not yet unruly pre-Parnell and Bradlaugh and Hardy's hot-headedness and insistence on taking dinner at home counted against him. His soul mates were the High Church wing of the party, he much enjoyed representing Oxford University, especially having defeated Gladstone, he came later on to a deep appreciation of his leader's political skills and he possessed few, if any, romantic assumptions regarding working-class enfranchisement. So long as society's traditional rulers continued to take their duties seriously and so long as the working classes continued to vote for their betters, then all would be well. On that basis he supported Reform and its prospect of party, personal and political advantage.³²

Northcote was Disraeli's great capture from the Peelites and Gladstone in the mid-1850s. He was M.P. for Dudley from 1855-7, then Stamford from 1858-66 before moving to North Devon. Northcote brought to the Tories competence, integrity, administrative understanding, reforming ability, a devout belief in low taxation, sound finance and moral probity. He was Disraeli's answer to Gladstone's

³² He wrote:

"If the gentry will take their part they will be adopted as leaders. If we are left to the demagogues God help us". Hardy Diary, op. cit., Friday, August 9th, 1867.

budgets. He possessed every virtue, except leadership, and, much more so than Gladstone, was the quintessential Peelite. Northcote served outside the Cabinet as Financial Secretary to the Treasury from February-June 1859. He was President of the Board of Trade from July 1866-March 1867 and then became India Secretary from then until the Government's fall. He did not become Chancellor in February 1868 for a number of reasons. A third Cabinet post in less than two years might be considered as un-Peelite, as not contributing to the requirements of good government. The Abyssinian relief expedition was in full swing when Disraeli became Prime Minister, thus making Cabinet changes difficult at a time when the motto needed to be business as usual. However, the appointment of Ward Hunt was really due to Disraeli's desire to stay in de facto control of financial policy.³³ Northcote was at one remove from Disraeli's machinations as he was too upright. This was accepted and there was no attempt at manipulation. There was no particular evidence that Disraeli consulted Northcote in any general sense on electoral matters even for his home county of Devon.

Stanley's marvellous diary indicated little specific interest in either Reform in general or Redistribution in particular. It helps to reinforce Cowling's analysis (and, as with Carnarvon's Diary, it was not available to the generation of scholars writing in the 1960s) that the fear of revolution was not a key issue. The Hyde Park riots were "mischief not malice". Stanley was of crucial importance to Disraeli because of his personal standing, name, parliamentary ability and somewhat morose acceptance of the inevitability of political change. He had little particular faith that Reform would be politically advantageous for the Conservatives but doing nothing might well be marginally worse. For slightly negative reasons, therefore, he was, more than any other key minister apart from his father, fully committed to Disraeli's path and in many respects, such as Redistribution and the secret ballot wished to go both further and faster. Even if no great good was to materialise from such changes it could, at the very least, halt the coming to power of people for whom, for a complex variety of reasons, Stanley did not care. These were Bright and Gladstone, whom he disliked because of their emotionalism and lack of judgment, Howells and Odger, whom he did not

³³ Matters were rectified in 1874 when Northcote finally became Chancellor and Ward Hunt went to the Admiralty. On Northcote, see A. Lang: "Life, Letters and Diaries of Sir Stafford Northcote, First Earl of Iddesleigh", two volumes, 1890-1.

think should be entrusted with political power, though they should certainly be enfranchised, the Adullamite Whigs, whom he thoroughly distrusted and the Conservative “Cave”, whose religious views he regarded as incomprehensible. Stanley’s atavistic dislike of Salisbury for personal reasons was a further inducement to support Disraeli. Stanley’s peculiar and difficult relationship with his father did not blind him to the fact that it was Derby who had made him Foreign Secretary in 1866, in an attempt to both bring him on politically and personally but also to try and keep him out of the domestic policy arena. His father always feared the worst whenever his son went to King’s Lynn, the constituency he had represented since the death of Lord George Bentinck in 1848.³⁴ It was here that Stanley made his most radical public utterances (as compared to his private ones), geographical isolation giving him the freedom to speak his mind and the electoral necessity of appealing to East Anglian idiosyncrasy and agricultural radicalism giving him the opportunity. His greatest interest in Redistribution came in 1859 when he responded to Bright’s scarily impractical schemes during the winter of 1858-9 with his own advanced plans for sweeping constituency changes.³⁵ He attended fewer Cabinets than his fellow diarist, Hardy, or, at least, he recorded his attendance at fewer, partly due to pressure of Foreign Office business and partly due to lack of relevance to him of the issues being discussed. His natural sympathies lay with the urban, reforming wing of the party, a trait heightened by his closeness to Disraeli and the proximity of Knowsley to Liverpool. He regarded the intellectual lumpen proletariat on the Tory backbenches with a quizzical indifference, being alive to his colleagues’ social importance and standing outside the Commons and of their utility within it but sceptical of their intellectual abilities in presentation of argument. He was as contemptuous of the Conservative “Cave” as Disraeli but was careful and cautious not to let it show in public, both for the sake of party unity and so as not to upset unduly his father.

Stanley was usually spoken of as the Prime Minister in waiting of any “Fusion” administration that might be formed in 1866-7 because of his reputation for

³⁴ Derby wrote:

“Stanley is going...down to [King’s] Lynn: I am always rather apprehensive as to what he may say on these occasions...” Derby to Disraeli, November 19th, 1863, H.P., Box 110/2, Ref. B/XX/S/317. Stanley was M.P. there from December 1848-December 1869.

³⁵ During the 1858-9 Government, Stanley was Colonial Secretary from February-May 1858 and then President of the Board of Control until June 1859.

liberalism.³⁶ Until 1868 he was also every sane Conservatives' choice to succeed Disraeli. Then matters became murkier. Stanley found the Irish Church issue which figured so prominently in 1868-9 extremely taxing to reconcile. As with Disraeli, his preferred solution to the problem was concurrent endowment but the opportunity went with the defeat of 1868. From 1869-72 Stanley considered that the Conservative party had been hijacked by the Church of England. He was so disgusted by this development that he questioned whether he wanted to continue his association with it. He was uncertain whether the party would be able to break away from this status of Anglican dependency. Clearly, if Disraeli could not do this then no one else possibly could. He was saved from a premature break with the party by the extraordinary series of by-election victories which began in the latter part of 1870 with the triumph in East Surrey in August 1871 convincing him that a second stint as Foreign Secretary was on the way. He could now conclude that his support for Disraeli and the new voting and constituency dispensations of 1867-8 had paid off and the party was set on the direction which he wanted it to take.

The fact that Stanley dedicated much of his career to not becoming Prime Minister meant that Disraeli could confide in, and trust, him more than any other of his younger, senior colleagues, which might, of course, not be saying very much. Stanley had no known enemies amongst the Radicals and had a number of admirers in their ranks.³⁷ He was not uncritical in his appreciation of Disraeli and the alterations in his own personal and political position between 1866-9 subtly, but measurably, changed the nature of their relationship.

He belatedly came of age by becoming Foreign Secretary, marrying and inheriting both Knowsley and the Earldom in this period. Stanley's last recorded visit to

³⁶ However, such a view was not unanimously held. Elcho wrote:

"Stanley is the only man on that side I have spoken to as I wished to ascertain what truth there is in his reputed Radicalism. None whatsoever! He is essentially anti-democratic politically..." Elcho to Grosvenor, January 15th, 1866, Elcho Papers.

³⁷ For his own party he Stanley was always a somewhat perplexing figure. Pope-Hennessy wrote of him in 1878:

"[Derby] has always been the theme of strange stories". Sir J. Pope-Hennessy to J. White, April 16th, 1878, James White Papers, National Liberal Club MSS., Bristol University Library, Special Collections, Ref. DM668. The date does not assist a rational assessment, the author was a by-word for unreliability, had a history of undertaking Disraeli's less salubrious work and a smear campaign was, no doubt, under way. Nevertheless, the sentiments expressed were widely held.

Hughenden was as soon as 1870-1: odd indeed given the earlier levels of intimacy.³⁸

³⁸ A little later on he wrote about Disraeli as follows:

“Disraeli is disliked by many, and not much trusted by those who like him best: nor can I wonder at it, for his way of looking at things is peculiar to himself, and the Reform Bill of 1867 cannot be forgotten. He has been unalterably faithful to his party connection, but with him a temporary success is an end in itself; he either does not care, or thinks it useless to struggle, for distant results: and indeed will sacrifice these for the advantage of the moment, as has often been seen”. Derby Diary, *op. cit.*, August 26th, 1871.

CHAPTER 4: YEARS OF OPPOSITION, 1848-66.

Reform, in general, and redistribution, in particular, rose to the top of the political agenda in 1866. It had been flagged in advance by Gladstone's "Pale of the Constitution" speech in 1864 and Palmerston's death in 1865. There had been previous Liberal flirtations with the issue in 1851-2, 1854 and 1860. Redistribution on its own came up in 1861 with the debates on what to do with the St. Albans and Sudbury seats, both constituencies having been disfranchised in the 1840s. Individual Liberal backbenchers raised particular reform measures throughout the period: Grote and Berkeley the secret ballot virtually every year, Hume political representation in 1848, Locke King the county franchise throughout the 1850s, Bright redistribution in 1858-9 and Baines the borough franchise in the early 1860s. The Conservatives, for their part, introduced a Reform Bill in 1859 and investigated the question seriously in 1852. Matters never entirely went away.

Disraeli approached the Reform question differently when in opposition compared to the two brief periods in power. When in opposition he attempted to make the settlement of 1832 work in the party's interest by building a coalition either with the Radicals or the Whigs. Neither option worked for a variety of reasons but crucial to their failure was Palmerston's refusal to countenance an alliance. When in government in 1852 and 1858-9 the opportunity existed to redraw the rigged electoral map. There was agreement amongst all sections of the party that the counties were under-represented. There was also some appreciation that a number of the boroughs cobbled together in 1832 were created in order to satisfy Whig party needs, not because they represented in any meaningful sense either a community or an interest. The problems arose over the solution rather than the cause. Both in 1859 and 1867 the keynote idea was to keep town and country separate. In the former case this was to be achieved by removing the county freeholder, resident in towns, from voting in the counties but in the latter year the same outcome was desired by proposing to redraw, and extend, the borough

boundaries in order to take predominantly urban, and suburban, populations as a whole out of the counties.¹

Within the party there were clear differences of opinion between reformers and traditionalists. Stanley led those who wished to tear up 1832 with Disraeli, Malmesbury and Pakington in support. In 1859 Henley and Walpole led the party opposition to the proposals. Derby sought to hold the balance whilst the rest of the front bench was usually open to leadership and persuasion. Protection tended to dominate party debate until 1851 when it was quietly and informally dropped. Foreign affairs then predominated until Palmerston's death in 1865 with interludes of domestic reform in between. Elections were lost every few years. The reverses of 1847, 1852 and 1857 might be ascribed to the split of 1846 (certainly some of the names used by Conservative candidates during these three contests suggested that this was the case) but not the shattering defeats of 1859 and 1865. They were the watershed for the party. It was reasonable to hope, and expect, that after the huge effort, cost and organisation made in 1859, one more heave in 1865 would end the Liberal hegemony. For that party to be returned with an increased majority, up from 15-65 was a disaster. The party began to face up to the prospect of a quarter of a century of opposition when Palmerston died in October, just four months after the general election. Belatedly, Russell now had his fourth opportunity in fifteen years to end his reputation for finality over parliamentary reform. Gladstone would be in charge in the Commons with no Palmerston both to keep him in check and the Whigs loyal. Like an old fox hound Disraeli sensed the change in the direction of the political wind and left his Hughenden lair.

The Early Opposition Years, 1846-54

Redistribution first came up in 1848 when Hume introduced into the Commons his "Motion on National Representation".² As Hume proposed forty extra seats for

¹ These considerations did not include specifically franchise issues. The main ones discussed during the period up to 1867 by the Tory party were the various possible levels of the borough franchise, the equalisation of town and country voting as proposed in 1859 and brought about in 1884, the "fancy franchises" and the introduction of voting papers as a half way house to a secret ballot. The issues of imperial and female enfranchisement were not properly on the agenda although Disraeli personally rather liked both possibilities.

² Joseph Hume, 1777-1855; M.P., (Lib.) Montrose 1842-55.

London, as well as a system of electoral districts based on population mixed with property, it was not too difficult for Disraeli to oppose.

Russell's first attempt at changing the 1832 settlement was foreshadowed in 1851 and introduced into the Commons the following February. It was both an instalment in his battle for party supremacy with Palmerston and an attempt to reclaim the mantle of Reform. Russell proposed no outright disfranchisement of the small boroughs except in cases of proven corruption. Where boroughs had less than five hundred electors, neighbouring districts should be grouped with them. Such a milk and water proposal died unlamented when the Liberal government fell later in the month over the Militia Bill.³ However, this first formal plan to group small English boroughs along the lines of Scotland and Wales, with their contributory towns as created in 1832, led to much Tory party research.⁴ Disraeli and Rose investigated fully how such a scheme would affect both individual boroughs and their associated counties.⁵ Maps were compiled for each English county: for Buckinghamshire the effect would have been as follows:

	<u>Borough</u>	<u>Additional towns to be grouped</u>
1	Aylesbury	N/A
2	Buckingham	Newport Pagnall, Stoney Stratford, Winslow
3	Great Marlow	Beaconsfield, Maidenhead
4	Wycombe	Amersham, Chesham

³ The Tory Protectionist, Sir John Tyrrell labelled it: "A Bill to retain Ministers in Office", Annual Register, 1852, p. 20.

⁴ Derby wrote:

"...assuming the Government to decide on a large measure of disfranchisement, affecting 30 to 40 seats...

I doubt this, however, John Russell and the Whigs have as little sense as we have to desire the whole power of the Country to be thrown into the hands of the great Towns; and the sacrificing of the small boroughs could not be made without seriously injuring the personal interests of some of their staunchest supporters..." Derby to Disraeli, December 11th, 1851, H.P., Box 109/1, Ref. B/XX/S/41.

Disraeli himself concentrated on the franchise proposals:

"The statistics of the suffrage again occupy me..." Disraeli to Rose, December 9th, 1851, from Hatfield, H.P., Box 307/1, Ref. R/1/A/93.

⁵ Derby advised about the counties as follows:

"I would strenuously resist any measure...to disturb the existing balance between differing interests, to give additional power to the congregation of large masses, and to swamp the County representation (which is the object of the radical party) by assimilating the Town and County franchise, as they have done in Ireland, and bringing the unrepresented towns to overbear by the Household...franchise, the County constituencies which now rest in the main on landed property". Derby to Disraeli, October 26th, 1851, H.P., Box 109/1, Ref. B/XX/S/39. A copy map of Buckinghamshire, black and white only, showing the proposed grouping is in the enclosed county collection.

However, as Russell’s measure did not proceed, of more immediate consequence in 1852 was the Bill to reassign the vacant St. Albans and Sudbury seats.⁶ As both were double member constituencies, four seats were available for redistribution and Disraeli proposed giving them to South Lancashire and the Yorkshire West Riding, by sub-division.⁷ For Disraeli to opt for these two great industrial seats as early as 1851 when there was seemingly no obvious party advantage to be had was, to some extent, far-sighted. The West Riding, in particular, had been a Liberal stronghold and the motivation for doing so was a mixture of remaining Young England romanticism, appeals to anti-Poor Law and pro-Factory Act sentiment and an appeal to dissident liberalism, in this case Radical rather than Whig.⁸

The registered electorates for both constituencies were:

West Riding, Yorkshire	37,319
South Lancashire	21,196

No other county constituency could possibly compete with these figures and only Middlesex with 14,610 electors in 1852 came anywhere close. As for the boroughs the only competition came from London but a recurring theme of the period, widely held in the Commons and not just on the Conservative side, was the reluctance to increase the capital’s representation.

⁶ Following a by-election in December 1850, St. Albans had been found guilty of bribery and was incorporated into Hertfordshire from May 3rd, 1852 onwards. Sudbury had been found guilty of the same following the 1841 General Election and it was incorporated into West Suffolk from July 29th, 1844.

⁷ It was hard to question the logic of this on any conceivable grounds: commonsense, “community”, equity, “interest”, population or taxation. However, did also offer nine institutions as being worthy of separate representation. They were: The Astronomical Society, The Geographical Society, The Inns of Court, London University, The Royal Academy of Arts, The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, The Royal Society, The Scottish Universities and the London Zoological Society. Each of these “interests” in early Victorian times was more likely to have been Conservative rather than Liberal with the exception of the university seats. The above list was the constituency equivalent of the “fancy franchises” of 1859.

⁸ Disraeli had appreciated that the halcyon days of liberalism in the seat had been in the 1830s. There were seven Liberal victories in that decade (the three general elections of 1832, 1835 and 1837, plus the contested by-election of 1835) but the Conservatives won both seats in 1841 and easily won a contested by-election in 1848. Beckett Denison, Tory M.P. for the constituency from 1841-7 and 1848-59 gave Disraeli excellent electoral intelligence about the seat, which was the foremost industrial one in England and, therefore, highly prestigious. Full electoral details are provided in the “Yorkshire and the North” chapter. As for South Lancashire, it had rather gone the other way, voting Tory 1835-41 inclusively but returning two Liberals unopposed in 1847. Full electoral details are in the “Lancashire and the North West” chapter.

The nearest equivalent borough figures were:

	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Electorate, 1852</u>
1	Tower Hamlets	23,534
2	City of London	20,728
3	Finsbury	20,025
4	Marylebone	19,710
5	Lambeth	18,131
6	Liverpool	17,433
7	Westminster	14,883

Manchester's electorate was under 15,000 and Birmingham, Greenwich and Southwark were all under 10,000.⁹ The Commons voted against proceeding with the Assignment of Seats Bill by 234-148.

The Conservatives drew up outline ideas for their own Bill in 1852, though they were not in a sufficiently strong parliamentary position to enable them to proceed with any realistic chance of success. Malmesbury and Stanley were the key shadow spokesmen in pushing Disraeli on to be as radical as possible in his planning.¹⁰ There was further detailed research when the leadership realised that, different to the circumstances of 1851-2, Russell was intent on introducing a

⁹ Derby, too, had undertaken extensive homework on the question. He noted:

"...I find a good case for S. Lancashire. (I put the West Riding out of the question as standing alone)...the number of Electors in the Tower Hamlets slightly exceeds that of S. Lancs. [The City of] London and one or two other metropolitan boroughs following and Liverpool standing firm above Middlesex, the next County to S.L., the population of S. Lancashire excluding all the Boroughs...stands at 608,265 against 279,735 the highest metropolitan population, whilst Finsbury, the next, is only 170,810". Derby to Disraeli, "Sunday night", n.d., December 1853, H.P., Box 109/2, Ref. B/XX/S/124.

¹⁰ Stanley wrote:

"'Vive La Reforme!' Malmesbury is well pleased with the sketch...You cannot go ahead too fast or too far for one of your followers nor for the official members of our party, generally speaking. But it will be very difficult, and require all your diplomacy, to persuade the squires to consent to any plan of reform.

...Malmesbury left this morning...On the reform question he contends that the five-pounders are democratic, the labourers Conservative: therefore, if we must go as low as £5, he would rather go on to universal suffrage". Stanley to Disraeli, January 27-28th, 1853, from Knowsley, H.P., Box 111/1, Refs. B/XX/S/587-8. In the February-December 1852 Tory Cabinet, Malmesbury (1807-89) was Foreign Secretary in the Lords, Stanley (1826-93) his deputy in the Commons.

major Reform measure in 1854.¹¹ He submitted it to the Commons in February and it was easily the clearest and best thought out measure after 1832 and before 1867, although its timing was all awry because of the crisis in the Near East. Russell argued that there were four serious weaknesses with the structure of the post-1832 settlement. They were: boroughs, either with electorates of fewer than 300, or with populations under 5,000, and the severe under-representation of both the counties and the large towns. The number of seats obtained by Russell's proposed disfranchisement was 66, by no means dissimilar to Disraeli's final figure of 52 in 1868. Although he led the Tory attack on the Bill, assisted by Derby and Manners, Disraeli seemed more concerned about timing than content. The Crimea saved him: if Russell had enacted it in 1854, there would have been, presumably, no Tory Bill in 1867. The only reason to oppose it was partisanship: the wrong party, for Disraeli, had introduced it and would gain the credit for giving justice to the counties. The Liberal Bill was in many respects, apart from the plans for the large towns, a much more generous measure to the landed interest than both the original, and subsequently revised, schedules in 1867. Two thirds of Russell's new creations were to go to counties.

¹¹ Derby commented:

"They [the Radicals] will follow J. Russell's late scheme of disfranchising small boroughs; or, by grouping them together, obtain a number of disposable seats. Then they will distribute a few to some learned bodies...some to the great unrepresented Towns...they increase...either by sub-division or by an increased number of Members to each, the numerical strength of the County Representation...a £10 franchise for the Counties...I have no actual data to go on: but...such a measure would...strengthen whatever is the...preponderating influence in the mixed districts...I do not know that the territorial interest would be losers by the change...Such a scheme would go far to obliterate the distinction between the County and the Borough franchise; between that which is more or less founded on property and on permanence; and that which depends on mere residence or occupation...I should much like to...go over with you, your statistics of Town and County representation. There is one fallacy...which is that of reckoning the unrepresented Towns as among the County population". Derby to Disraeli, November 14th, 1853, H.P., Box 109/2, Ref. B/XX/S/122.

A month later Derby wrote another long letter about Russell's plans:

"Since you left me, I have been examining the "Fitzroy return"...the disproportionate weight given to the Boroughs as compared with the Counties...enquire how the results would come out on a comparison of the Registered Electors...I send you another scrap, the result of my calculations...I have no better authority than Dod...

Might it not also be asked, if you are to disfranchise English boroughs being less than 500 voters on the ground that such small Constituencies are subject to undue influences, by what argument do you defend the maintenance of Irish boroughs, with smaller numbers, and a lesser rate of qualification?

Is it because the influence in the one case is that of the gentlemen of landed property, and in the other that of the R.C. priest? I do not see the answer to this argument..." Derby to Disraeli, December 18th, 1853, H.P., Box 109/2, Ref. B/XX/S/123.

The details were:

	<u>Details</u>	<u>Number of seats obtained</u>
1	Whole disfranchisement of 19 boroughs	29
2	Partial disfranchisement of 33 boroughs	33
3	Seats vacant	4
	Total	66
1	New county seats	46
2	New borough seats	14
3	Extra seats for Scotland	3
4	Other	3
	Total	66

The principles used were the complete disfranchisement of constituencies, either with electorates below 300, or populations below 5,000. There were ten such double member boroughs and nine single ones. The cut off points for losing one M.P. were either electorates below 500 or populations below 10,000. These were the up-graded Schedules A and B from 1832. Counties, or county divisions, and large towns with populations over 100,000 would receive one extra M.P. each. The West Riding and South Lancashire would be doubly sub-divided and there were to be six new seats with eight M.P.s. between them.¹² Although the Bill was withdrawn due to the Crimean crisis, Russell’s plans left a deep impression on Tory thinking.¹³ The final redistribution settlement in 1867-8 was, in many respects, a watered down version of his 1854 proposals, though obviously the new franchises, after 1867, went much further.

¹² The double member ones were: Kensington and Chelsea and the Inns of Court, the single ones Birkenhead, Burnley, Stalybridge and London University. Where Russell’s changes, to both disfranchisement and enfranchisement, were the same as Disraeli’s in 1867-8 this is indicated in the relevant chapters. The franchise plans were for a £10 household qualification in the counties and a £6 rating one in the boroughs. There was, also, introduced a range of “fancy franchises” and a minority voting clause in tripartite constituencies.

Stanley commented about the Bill:

“Lord John introduced his reform bill...When first enunciated, the plan seemed to startle the House, from its magnitude: Lord John’s speech was clear, but dry and feeble, on the whole unequal to the occasion. He seemed to suffer while delivering it, and went away immediately afterwards. Out of doors was no visible excitement: the galleries not full: nor any crowd about the lobbies, or in Westminster Hall. Within was more curiosity than enthusiasm: I did not hear one hearty cheer: the speeches which followed were more desultory comments...” Stanley Journals, op. cit., February 13th, 1854.

¹³ Stanley described the end of the Bill as follows:

“Lord John, with reluctance hardly disguised, announced the farther postponement of the Reform Bill...nobody appears to entertain an idea that the bill will ever be heard of again”. Stanley Journals, op. cit., March 3rd, 1854.

Foreign affairs concerning the Crimea, India and Italy then predominated until Bright rather brusquely reawakened Redistribution as a major political question in the winter of 1858-9.¹⁴ He used the issue as a way of relaunching his political career making nine major speeches on a northern tour between October 1858 and February 1859. Although there were other plans, the main focus was on a major and complex scheme of redistribution, which was not initially accompanied by the necessary details.¹⁵ Because the Commons was not in session, opposition was led by "The Times" and its leader writers. In response, Bright then produced eleven remorselessly detailed redistribution schedules, which was the nearest that the mid-Victorian period came to the advocacy of electoral districts as found in America.¹⁶ His plans were really a re-run of 1832, rather than a harbinger of 1867. There was a huge, and no doubt gratuitous, over-emphasis on the larger boroughs, with small boroughs and counties not really appearing in Bright's thinking at all.¹⁷ He proposed complete disfranchisement at a population level of under 8,000 and partial at 16,000. This, with the four vacant St. Albans and Sudbury seats released 125 places for redistribution. Virtually all were to go to the larger boroughs with just 18 scheduled for the counties. Bright really only regarded four counties as really mattering: East Surrey, Middlesex, South Lancashire and the West Riding, and for the mid-Victorian political generation, they were not really what was normally meant by the term "county" at all.

The plan was the nearest that any major politician came, before 1866, to advocate constituencies solely on the basis of population alone and to completely ignore the

¹⁴ Bright seemed to have suffered some sort of nervous breakdown from 1855-7. He was defeated in the 1857 General Election at Manchester before being elected in August for Birmingham at the by-election caused by the death of George Muntz. Bright did not take up his seat until January 1858.

¹⁵ The other themes were for the secret ballot to be introduced, for there to be a £6 suffrage in both boroughs and counties and for the wholesale abolition of those aristocratic welfare institutions, the Foreign Office and the House of Lords.

¹⁶ Whether Bright undertook the detailed work himself is unclear, but unlikely. For possibilities regarding assistance, see R.A.J. Walling, editor: "The Diaries of John Bright, 1837-87", 1930.

¹⁷ He said:

"What can we say for Midhurst? What for Arundel? What for Calne? What for Ludlow? What for many others in the same category? You cannot say of them that they are Liberal...or Conservative boroughs. They...take their tone from some gentleman or lady whom anyone in the neighbourhood could name. But, if we take a higher class...at least one third...of the boroughs...are as much agricultural constituencies as the counties themselves...the neighbouring landowners...and the surrounding farmers...return the members for very large towns in rural districts..." "The Times", December 4th, 1858, p. 6.

concepts of “community” and “interest”. “The Times’s” leader writers, probably led by Lowe, were quick to appreciate the manipulative cleverness beneath Bright’s apparent openness and honesty. On the surface it appeared as though he was making a perfectly reasonable and valid case on behalf of the under-represented larger towns and cities. However, as the great county divisions, with four exceptions, were all but ignored, the real aim of his campaign was to destroy rural and small town Toryism once and for all. To counter possible support for his proposals, “The Times” produced its own redistribution schedules in January 1859.¹⁸

Bright’s campaign failed to catch on and when he next took to the hustings in 1866 it was as the champion of “Liberty” instead of “Redistribution”. Nevertheless, he had managed to upset people of property and provide a foretaste of what might transpire. For Derby and Disraeli the whole episode provided the backdrop to their own Reform Bill of 1859, without in any particular way influencing it, though Bright clearly made an impression on Stanley. Nevertheless, Bright’s proposals, however unrealistic in the circumstances they might have been, provided a warning to the Tory leaders of what might happen once Palmerston went and an aroused public opinion, potentially orchestrated by Bright and Gladstone, sought to impose a second and definitive version of 1832. Consequently, a Conservative “settlement” of the Reform issue in 1858-9 became an attractive, and important, option for the party leaders.

The other catalyst to 1859, or so Disraeli claimed, probably disingenuously, was the final passage of Locke King’s motion to equalise both borough and county household franchises at £10, after nine years of trying to get it accepted. It finally passed the Commons in 1858 and the official Tory response was dread at its effects in the counties.

¹⁸ These were published on January 22nd, 1859 in a detailed scheme entitled: “The Representation of England and Wales equitably adjusted, with reference to Population and Property Assessment”. The listings were marginally altered a few days later in response to correspondents’ letters. The author was Sir John Eardley-Wilmot, then Recorder of Warwick. His proposals were based upon his pamphlet entitled: “A Second Letter to Richard Freedom Esq., on the Redistribution, Extension and Purification of the Electoral Franchise”. Eardley-Wilmot was Conservative M.P. for South Warwickshire 1874-85, before being defeated for Birmingham Edgbaston in that year.

The 1859 Reform Bill was clearly a response to its implications.¹⁹ Now best remembered for its attempts to reward, electorally, intelligence, property and virtue, by additional votes, dubbed the “fancy franchises” by their critics, Tory plans had a long gestation. Originally, the thinking was to make bold and radical proposals for the constituencies but over time these were watered down and ultimately were so thin and lacking in substance, that they almost appear as an afterthought. The only mitigation was both the parliamentary and party arithmetic in 1859. This was a fore-runner of the same predicament in which the Conservatives found themselves in 1867-8. The difference in the outcome was due to the fact that, both in 1859-60 and then in 1866, Disraeli’s aim was to work with the Whigs against the forces of radicalism, be they led by Bright, or Gladstone, or both of them. In 1867 the tactics changed to working with the Radicals, minus their formal leaders, against both the Whigs and the Tory recalcitrants. This increased the odds as Radicals wanted more reform and redistribution than Whigs.

¹⁹ The sequence of votes on his motion during the 1850s was as follows:

1850	Defeated 159-100
1851	Defeated 100-52
1852	Defeated 202-149
1853	Withdrawn following Russell’s pledge to introduce a Reform Bill
1854	Incorporated into Russell’s Reform Bill
1855	No motion because of the Crimean war
1856	No motion because of the Crimean War
1857	Defeated 192-179
1858	Passed 226-168

For Locke King’s parliamentary details, see the county entry for East Surrey. Disraeli spoke against his “Motion on the County Franchise” in 1850-2 inclusively, 1858 and then twice in 1861.

The research for a possible Bill had begun in 1857.²⁰ This was, in part, because Derby had picked up intimations of another Liberal bill in early 1858.²¹ With the change of administration in 1858 and Indian affairs dominating that year's session, serious planning for a possible Reform bill took place from August onwards.²² Further inconclusive discussion took place before a Cabinet committee was set up in October.²³ The Committee's membership was Derby, Disraeli, Jolliffe, Manners, Pakington, Salisbury and Stanley with Chelmsford, Hardwicke, Henley, Peel and Walpole excluded. It produced its draft report at the end of the month. It concluded that there would be a Bill for England and Wales only, that there would be no increase in the size of the Commons and that there would be no alteration to the individual country's number of M.P.s.²⁴ The borough and county franchises would be merged and the former freeholders and leaseholders would vote in their resident towns. Over redistribution the Committee recommended using the rather out of date 1851 Census figures. It rejected both grouping and

²⁰ Derby wrote:

"You might...with perfect fairness add, that the County electors would show a much higher amount of qualification than the same number of Borough Electors; an additional ground why...they should have a not inferior share of representation. To bring them...to an equality, would require the addition of between 80 and 90 seats to the County constituencies...I am afraid the very strength of our case will prove its weakness: especially as well-founded objections are taken to the single member system...Apart from this...the main weakness of the present law is the exclusion from all share in the representation of those £10ers who do not happen to live within a borough; and this can only be remedied by a scheme...of surrounding every Borough with a certain "arrondissement", covering, among them, the whole country, within each of which the Borough qualification should be exercised for the Borough, and the property qualification...for the County...I think it could have a Conservative tendency...I am afraid there would be great practical difficulties...

To sum up, I think our two principles should be adherence to the present franchises for County and Town...and approximation to a just proportion between the number[s] of Representatives allotted to each. We ought to resist lowering the franchise, abolition of rate paying clauses and the Ballot". Derby to Disraeli, April 24th, 1857, H.P., Box 109/2, Ref. B/XX/S/148.

²¹ He noted:

"H.Lennox writes me...that we are to have a very "stiff" Reform Bill, with a long schedule of partial, and another equally so of entire disfranchisement. I own I very much doubt it". Derby to Disraeli, January 2nd, 1858, H.P., Box 109/2, Ref. B/XX/S/158.

²² Derby wrote:

"I am to have another conversation with [Rose]... [he] is in favour of a £6 rating...The houses between £6 and £10 will add 50% to the present constituencies. The keystone of the whole must be making freeholders in boroughs, voters for the boroughs, and not for the counties, as at present". Derby to Disraeli, August 25th, 1858, H.P., Box 109/2, Ref. B/XX/S/180.

²³ "...the Cabinet for which you will have already issued a summons for Wednesday. We must then set...the Reform Committee...to work". Derby to Disraeli, October 26th, 1858, H.P., Box 109/2, Ref. B/XX/S/183.

²⁴ "Scotland might claim a slight increase, while Ireland would be subjected to a considerable reduction". Draft report of Cabinet Committee on Reform, November 26th, 1858, H.P., Box 109/2.

extending the boundaries of the small boroughs and went, instead, for a wide-ranging measure of disfranchisement:

<u>Wholly disfranchised</u>	Boroughs under 5,000 population	M.P.s disfranchised: 16 (6 seats to lose both M.P.s; 4 seats to lose 1 each)
<u>Partially disfranchised</u>	Boroughs of 5,000-15,000 population	M.P.s disfranchised: 57 (each to lose 1 M.P.)

With only two exceptions, South Lancashire and the West Riding, no new constituencies were to be created.²⁵ Instead, 52 additional M.P.s would go to the counties by dividing the above and then adding 48 more, according to population. Any county, or county division, with a population in excess of 100,000 would have a third M.P. added, and any over 50,000, a second M.P. likewise. Using similar principles for the boroughs would add a further 18 seats, leaving a balance of three either for Scotland, or the Universities, or the Inns of Court.²⁶

There then followed further research by Rose on the likely effects of these recommendations, initially on the franchise implications for the Tory strongholds in the counties.²⁷ They passed muster but he then raised an important concern about the redistribution plans, which reappeared in 1867-8.²⁸ At the same time as these doubts were raised, Disraeli received information that the Whigs wanted the

²⁵ "...if new Constituencies were admitted, the invidious necessity for a Boundary Commission". Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid. See, also, A. Hawkins: "Parliament, Party and the Art of Politics in Britain, 1855-9", 1987, in particular Chapter 9 for the political background and parliamentary setting.

²⁷ He wrote about the franchise plans:

"...the isolation of Boroughs from Counties, even if no new boroughs are created, will remove 90,000 voters from the County Register, a class of voters the great majority of whom are infected with the radicalism of the large Boroughs in which they dwell...Every one will admit that the exchange of these 90,000 votes for a like number of £10 occupiers in Counties would all be in favour of the Conservative cause..."

In Shoreham, Cricklade and Bassetlaw, the £10 occupiers are in a Conservative predominance. In Aylesbury, though not actually predominant, they are the class of voters most to be relied on.

"...in small county towns with a population ranging from 1,000-6,000 no danger is to be apprehended...A resident landowner can always command the seat of a small Borough". Memorandum on Reform by Rose, January 24th, 1859, H.P., Box 308/1, Ref. R/1/B/78c.

²⁸ "I have sent you a memo [random]. on Disfranchisement..."

Two members will in any case suffice...and to add a third is to adopt the principles of "counselling" the representation of the country, with masses of wealth and population, instead of adapting it to the local wants and varying interests of every class, whether constituting a minority or majority.

Any such number as 5 or 6 members for one Borough Constituency is dangerous in the extreme. The rashness and concentration of the matter leads to popular excitement and disturbance..." Rose to Disraeli, February 9th, 1859, H.P., Box 308/1, Refs. R/1/B/53 and 54b.

redistribution to be scaled down.²⁹ These factors, plus the over-riding need for party unity thus not jeopardising the gains made since 1846 and the fact that the cautious Derby of 1859 was not the incautious figure of 1867, led to the Cabinet coming down on the side of pusillanimity over the constituencies. Stanley initially feared that, given the extent of Cabinet opposition which included Hardwicke, Henley, Peel and Walpole, there might be no redistribution at all. He led the "forward" element in the Cabinet evincing an unprecedented zeal for a radical approach to redistribution.³⁰ Stanley detailed his thinking in a similar vein to Disraeli:

"...You now propose to deal with the redistribution of seats in the present session and in the same Bill which contains our amendments in the franchise: but you propose to deal with it in a manner which...will place the Government...in opposition to the general sense of Parliament and the public...

...your present plan...you see nothing to find fault with in the existing distribution of political power among the various constituencies of the country, when the petty change suggested, to the extent of 14 seats, has been carried out...I believe the existence of these very small constituencies...to be an abuse...

I thought our first outline, including 70 seats, fair and sound: I consented to a reduction to between 40 and 50, for the sake of agreement...my opinion...is fully shared by Pakington: it is so to a less extent by John Manners and Malmesbury...

²⁹ G.A.Hamilton wrote:

"Hayter- I am told on good authority, says that his section- the Palmerstonian Whigs- consider the Bill in many respects as a very good one- and, they say, that but for the disfranchisement part, it would be accepted by all moderate men- and still would if that were withdrawn". G.A.Hamilton to Disraeli, March 13th, 1859, H.P., Box 98/2, Ref. B/XX/H/89.

³⁰ He wrote to his father:

"I have seen with regret...your opinion that no disfranchisement ought to take place during the present session...the demand for redistribution of seats is not disposed of. The ultra-Liberal party attach more importance to it than they do to the ...suffrage.

...not half a dozen men in the entire party expect a measure which shall leave untouched the question of redistribution...they had rather it were done by friends than by opponents...rather to seem to yield freely what must be yielded, than have it torn from them in an unsuccessful and humiliating contest...The argument for waiting for the next census...would be laughed out of court...it espouses that exact apportioning of representatives to numbers...which could only be carried out by electoral districts...it implies a delay of 4 years (the Census of 1851 was not given to the public till the end of 1852). Whigs and Radicals will join against you and not all your friends will support.

...that no disfranchisement whatever would be proposed was an idea that never entered my mind: nor did it seem to have entered that of the Cabinet...Pakington and J. Manners, are almost as strongly averse to the new plan as I am- which is saying a good deal..." Stanley to Derby, February 8th, 1859, H.P., Box 111/2, Ref. B/XX/S/675.

You need not state your scheme for a fortnight...the details can be arranged in a few hours.

Even assuming that Peel's threat is made good...It is unfortunate that the Cabinet should be disunited: and the loss of Henley is serious: but if Peel and Hardwicke should follow their comrades, I do not know that the secession will be more mischievous...

Very seldom on any subject have I entertained a stronger conviction".³¹

This pressure from the left of the party was matched by the right with Walpole leading the way.³² Jolliffe, the Chief Whip, offered something of a middle way, seeking to make a distinction of sorts between what might be regarded as the legitimate smaller boroughs, representing clearly defined communities or interests and the artificial creations of 1832.³³ There was something of a compromise achieved: the party leadership pushed on with the equalisation of the borough and county franchises but reduced the redistribution to an afterthought. Derby hardly thought it to be in the party's interest to worry too much about it. He wrote:

"Of all the 15 seats from the 10 small boroughs, I do not think we have above two! And these are the Boroughs for which Walpole is fighting".³⁴

Neither wing of the party was placated. Henley and Walpole still resigned, though no one else and there was a "Cave", similar in terms of high quality, small

³¹ Stanley to Disraeli, February 9-10th, 1859, H.P., Box 111/2, Ref. B/XX/S/676.

³² Derby wrote of Walpole's objections:

"I have received the "Chancery Brief", 87 folios [Walpole's case against the Reform Bill]...the main objections are...the assimilation of the County and Borough franchise...and to any total, or more than a very slight, partial, disfranchisement...

Henley would consent apparently to a considerable amount of disfranchisement..." Derby to Disraeli, January 20th, 1859, H.P., Box 110/1, Ref. B/XX/S/205.

³³ He advised:

"As regards disfranchisement, I believe the Committee have proceeded quite as far in the disfranchisement of the 2nd seats for considerable towns (those under 15,000 inhabitants) as would be desirable...the disfranchisement of inconsiderable places, having only 1 member, must be proceeded with further... [it] should include all those which are indebted to the Reform Bill of 1832 for the addition of rural districts, which bring up their pop[ulation]...to 5,000. If co[unty]. towns like Wells...are to be disfranchised, I cannot believe that it will be tolerated that Midhurst and Petersfield shall be left...on a par with Winchester and Guildford. More total disfranchisement must be inflicted. And the seats must be distributed to the large towns with a pop[ulation]. over 20,000 and a few may perhaps be transferred to the counties, as well as to the larger towns of Scotland". Jolliffe to Disraeli, n.d., but early 1859, H.P., Box 101/1, Ref. B/XX/J/62. On Jolliffe see: "A Selection from the Correspondence of the Right Honourable Sir William Jolliffe, Bart., ed..., M.P.", (Lord Hylton), 1905.

³⁴ Derby to Disraeli, January 19th, 1859, H.P., Box 110/1, Ref. B/XX/S/212. Quite how he arrived at these rather melodramatic figures is unclear.

quantity and terms of reference to 1867.³⁵

When Disraeli introduced his redistribution proposals on February 28th 1859, they included the disfranchisement of just fifteen seats, all from double member constituencies with populations under 6,000.³⁶ They were, with their 1857 General Election results, in place order, as follows:

1	Andover	1C,1L
2	Evesham	1C,1L
3	Harwich	2L
4	Honiton	1L,1C
5	Knaresborough	2C
6	Leominster	2C*
7	Ludlow	2C*
8	Lymington	1L,1C
9	Maldon	1L,1C
10	Marlborough	2L
11	Richmond	2L*
12	Tewkesbury	1C,1L
13	Thetford	1C,1L*
14	Totnes	2L
15	Wells	1C,1L* ³⁷

The overall result in these small boroughs in 1857 was: Conservative 14, Liberal 16. If the second placed M.P.s were to be disfranchised, there would have been 8 Liberal and 7 Conservative losses.³⁸ The redistribution proposals were as miserly, with eight new seats going to just three counties and seven to boroughs.

³⁵ "Bentinck's meeting has gone...very favourably...There were 36 present...There are about 8 who will...vote against the 2nd R[eadings]...Palmer, Du Cane, Newdegate, Spooner, Knightley, Beresford...not to resign if you are beaten on the 2 R[eadings]. But to stand...a vote of want of confidence". "M.P." to Disraeli, March 16th, 1859, H.P., Box 110/1.

³⁶ Gladstone commented on the Bill:

"G. seems to know that the Bill was enacted by L[ord] Stanley, D'Israeli & L[ord] Derby exclusively and then thrust upon the rest of the Cabinet". Sir Robert Phillimore, diary extract copy made by Sir Walter Phillimore, probably for Morley's biography, original date March 5th, 1859, Christ Church Library, Oxford.

³⁷ The asterisk in this, and all subsequent constituency tables, indicates that no contest took place.

³⁸ Because there was no contest on which to judge Thetford and Wells, previous and future contests have been used to arrive at a judgment. The other three seats in which there was no contest, namely Leominster, Ludlow and Richmond are straightforward because the same party won returned M.P.s.

They were:

	Counties
1	Yorkshire, West Riding (+4) ³⁹
2	Lancashire, South (+2)
3	Middlesex (+2)
	Boroughs (All +1)
1	Birkenhead
2	Burnley
3	Croydon
4	Gravesend
5	Hartlepool
6	Stalybridge
7	West Bromwich

The nearest comparisons that can be made were with the actual changes of 1861 and 1868. In Yorkshire, the effect in the West Riding would have been the creation of two, new, Tory seats in the new, agricultural North West Division, based on Ripon and Skipton and two Liberal ones in the South, centred on Huddersfield and Sheffield. In Lancashire, the Conservatives legitimately expected to make two gains, especially as the 1859 Bill transferred one of the more rural North Lancashire hundreds into the proposed West Derby Division of the to be divided Southern seat.⁴⁰ In Middlesex, there was to be a northern, agricultural, suburban seat, based on Enfield, which would be Tory and a southern, metropolitan and urban one, based on Chelsea, Hammersmith and Kensington, which would be Liberal. The net effect in the counties would have been to give the Tories two seats.

Of the planned seven, new boroughs, the only truly Tory one were Birkenhead. Stalybridge was won twice by the party at general elections between 1868-80 and there were realistic, though in the event largely unfounded, Conservative hopes for the two port seats of Gravesend and Hartlepool. The other three, new boroughs would have been solidly Liberal, though the effects of creating them on their

³⁹ The proposed divisions for the West Riding were:

	<u>Population</u>	<u>Property (£)</u>
North West	129,000	809,000
South	225,000	808,000
West	472,000	963,000
Totals	826,000	2,580,000

⁴⁰ Russell's 1854 bill had not done this.

associated counties need to be borne in mind. Using the proposed 1868 boundaries, for instance, would have meant a Conservative gain in East Surrey to offset the creation of Croydon.⁴¹ The best estimate for the boroughs would be two Tory gains in Birkenhead and Stalybridge and five Liberal ones in the others, with Croydon and East Surrey cancelling each other out: a net Liberal borough increase of two seats.

With boroughs and counties effectively cancelling themselves out, the overall effect was the loss of one Liberal seat from the proposed disfranchisement. Such a limited outcome suggested that Stanley was quite correct in pushing for a wider measure from which might accrue greater party advantage. For the party's "Young Turks" advocating "Conservative progress" the outcome was most dreadfully disappointing. Apart from the miserly redistribution, Disraeli's Bill only added 150,000 new voters to the franchise and transferred 100,000 electors from the counties to the boroughs.⁴² The subsequent defeat of the Bill, on Russell's Amendment against both the uniform borough and county franchise and the removal of the borough freeholders from the counties, by 330-291 (31 Liberals voting with the Tories) followed. This defeat triggered the General Election of 1859, an appeal to the country which Gladstone regarded as unconstitutional.⁴³

⁴¹ In 1859, an Enclosure Commission was proposed in order to oversee the boundary changes.

⁴² Gladstone commented about the franchise proposals:

"...if D'Israeli c[oul]d. persuade the Conservative party to abolish the distinction between Co[un]ty. & Borough suffrage he may persuade them to do anything. It baffles all ordinary calculation". Phillimore Diary, op. cit., March 21st, 1859.

⁴³ "G. thinks Gov[ernmen]t. abominable...their conduct with respect to the Reform Bill and the dissolution...He agreed that since 1832 Reform was a question of expediency rather than principle...The Queen is angry at the dissolution. Ld. Derby claimed it as his right. "Ld. D. is terrified at D'I", Walpole told Mr. G. G. thinks the Gov[ernmen]t. nothing more than the extension of D'I's will...Ibid. April 6th, 1859.

The overall results for the 1857 and 1859 General Elections were:

	Conservative	Liberal
1857	264	377
1859	298	356 ⁴⁴

At the subsequent Amendment to the Queen's Speech, the Conservatives were defeated by 323-310 and resigned office. Party policy over reform now became, once again, working with Palmerstonian conservatism to stop Russellite reform, though the party think tank offered an alternative possibility.⁴⁵ Russell's 1860 redistribution plans were but a shadow of the profound measure of 1854. He accepted the disfranchisement of the 15 seats from 1859 and added just 10 more, taking the population limit for the loss of one M.P. in double member constituencies to 7,000, as was to happen in 1867. The additional 10, with their relevant voting records at the 1857 and 1859 General Elections, were:

	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>1857</u>	<u>1859</u>
1	Bodmin	2L	1C,1L
2	Chippenham	2C	1C,1L*
3	Cirencester	2C	1C,1L
4	Devizes	1L,1C	2C
5	Dorchester	1L,1C*	1L,1C*
6	Guildford	1L,1C	1C,1L*
7	Hertford	1L,1C	1L,1C*
8	Huntingdon	2C*	2C*
9	Marlow	2C*	2C
10	Ripon	2L*	2L
Totals		12C,8L	12C,8L

⁴⁴ There is, inevitably, some dispute and disagreement over the exact figures, especially given the changes in nomenclature of particular Conservative candidates between 1857-9. Craig's individual country totals, which nearly tally with other authorities and Disraeli's own were:

	1857		1859	
	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>
England	185	275	208	252
Wales	17	15	17	15
Scotland	14	39	13	40
Ireland	42	61	53	50
Universities	6	0	6	0
United Kingdom	264	390	297	357

Craig, op. cit., p. 622.

⁴⁵ "Derbyism seems to be everywhere on the advance. My only fear is that its popularity should offer you an opportunity of returning to office too soon: I think if you could see your way to concur with the Gov[ernment]t. in passing a moderate Reform Bill nothing can prevent you being...[in]... office two years hence". Rose to Disraeli, November 12th, 1859, H.P., Box 308/1, Ref. R/1/B/61.

Here was some evidence to support Derby's belief that the smaller, rather than the small boroughs, were inclined to the Tories. However, for the party's radicals such a distinction was meaningless.⁴⁶ Of Disraeli's original 15 seats, there was no net change in them as a consequence of the 1859 Election.⁴⁷ Using the same statistical basis for Russell's plans as was used for Disraeli's in 1859, and taking into account the General Election result of that year, the effect of the Liberals' proposed disfranchisement in 1860 would have been:

<u>Seats</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>
1859	6	9
1860	6	4

The redistribution plan was for 15 seats to go to the counties, 5 to the new boroughs, 4 to the old and 1 to the universities. Rather than creating new seats, except where it was absolutely essential, Russell increased the existing number of M.P.s, usually by one each.⁴⁸ He intended maximum party advantage by so doing. As far as the counties were concerned, the underlying theme was the exact opposite of the Cairns' Amendment in 1867. There, he intended for the Tories to obtain minority representation as the winners of the third M.P. in the great towns. Here, Russell intended for the Liberals to gain ground, by winning the third seat, in the English counties. Tory policy was to divide the counties, whilst the Liberal alternative, first brought in, in 1832, for seven of them, was to extend the tripartite

⁴⁶ "...I doubt...whether the preservation of so many very small boroughs is a Conservative measure...in 10 or 15 years a new agitation will sweep them away..." Stanley to Disraeli, March 17th, 1860, from a memorandum on the 1860 Reform Bill, H.P., Box 111/3, ref. B/XX/S/700a.

⁴⁷ The Conservatives gained one seat in Harwich and lost one in Thetford. In Maldon, first and second changed places.

⁴⁸ The 15 additional county seats were: West Riding, Yorkshire, x2; West Cornwall, South Devon, North Essex, South Essex, West Kent, Lincolnshire (Lindsey), North Lancashire, South Lancashire, Middlesex, West Norfolk, East Somerset, South Staffordshire, and North Yorkshire all x1. The 5 new borough seats were: Kensington and Chelsea x2, Birkenhead, Burnley and Stalybridge all x1; for the 4 old boroughs: Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester all received one additional M.P. London University was to be the sole new university constituency.

principle.⁴⁹ It is, of course, not possible to be certain as to how Russell's plans would have worked out in practice, as neither the redistribution, nor the franchise, proposals came to pass.⁵⁰ However, the most likely outcome was:

<u>Conservative gains</u>	9
<u>Liberal gains</u>	13
<u>Too close to call</u>	3 ⁵¹

Derby realised early on that the measure was aimed at pleasing Russell's Radical friends and was unpopular with his fellow Whigs.⁵²

⁴⁹ Derby wrote:

"I should look with as much jealousy as yourself at the proposition of giving third members to many of the co[untie]s. It was a mistake in the first Reform Bill". Derby to Disraeli, January 19th, 1860, H.P., Box 110/1, Ref. B/XX/S/262. The results in the tripartite counties for the 1859 General Election, were:

1	Berkshire	2L,1C*
2	Buckinghamshire	2C,1L*
3	Cambridgeshire	2C,1L*
4	Dorset	2C,1L*
5	Herefordshire	2C,1L*
6	Hertfordshire	2C,1L*
7	Oxfordshire	2C,1L*

There were no contests in any of these counties for that year. The Liberals had minority representation in 6 out of the 7 such counties and the Tories just one.

⁵⁰ He planned for a reduction of the county occupation franchise from £50-£10 and for the borough household one to 36 rental. The still vacant St. Albans and Sudbury seats were left in reserve for Ireland and Scotland.

⁵¹ Conservative gains in the counties were: South Devon, North Essex, South Lancashire, Middlesex, West Norfolk, East Somerset and the Yorkshire, West Riding x1; in the boroughs: Birkenhead and Stalybridge only. Computed Liberal gains in the counties were: West Cornwall, South Essex, West Kent, South Staffordshire and the Yorkshire, West Riding x1; in the boroughs: Birmingham, Burnley, Kensington and Chelsea x2, Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester. The other Liberal gain would have been London University. The situations in Lincolnshire (Lindsey), North Lancashire and North Yorkshire were too close to call.

⁵² He wrote from Kimbolton:

"...if the new Elections under the Gov[ernmen]t. Bill would be disastrous to the Tory party, they would be, to the Whigs, political annihilation". Derby to Disraeli, March 13th, 1860, H.P., Box 110/1, Ref. B/XX/S/268.

This fact, plus the foreign situation and lack of support from his own party leadership, led to the measure being withdrawn.⁵³ This split, which foreshadowed 1866, was commented upon by Phillimore, who wrote:

“G. has taken his name off the Carlton, which I regret. It is a marked and significant act of entire separation from the whole party & will strengthen D'I's hands. The Whigs hate G. The moderate Conservatives & the Radicals incline to him. The old Tories hate him”.⁵⁴

The only actual measure of redistribution before 1868 was the final settlement of the suspended St. Albans and Sudbury seats in 1861. This was in lieu of a more general plan of redistribution, which would have reawakened some of the differences of the previous year, and came about partly in response to Baines's Bill for a reduction in the borough household franchise to £6. The initial Liberal plan was to give the four seats to Birkenhead, Chelsea and Kensington, South Lancashire and the Yorkshire, West Riding.⁵⁵ In its passage through the Commons Chelsea was dropped due to the majority of M.P.s disliking the idea of increasing metropolitan representation.

⁵³ Derby informed Disraeli:

“...The Times intimates plainly that it is intended to give up the Reform Bill...Whitmore writes me word that if MacKinnon's motion comes on, it will be left an open question for the supporters of the Gov[ernment], and that 37 Lib[eral]s. have given in their names as opposing the Gov[ernment] on that occasion and 28 more as staying away. If this be so, there can be no doubt as to the connivance of Pam...” Derby to Disraeli, May 26th, 1860, H.P., Box110/1, Ref. B/XX/S/272. For the MacKinnon's, see the chapter on the South East, with county entries for Hampshire and Sussex; for Whitmore, who was a Tory Whip in 1860, see the chapter on the West Midlands, with the county entry for Staffordshire. For the internal workings of the Whig Cabinet at this time, see J.Parry: “The Rise and Fall of Liberal Government in Victorian Britain”, 1993 and E.D.Steele: “Palmerston and Liberalism, 1855-65”, 1991. There is also an American study, which covers non-redistribution matters in some detail by E.Walker: “Struggle for the Reform of Parliament, 1853-67”, New York, 1977.

⁵⁴ Phillimore Diary, op. cit., March 30th, 1860.

⁵⁵ Stanley commented:

“...on the whole, this seems as fair a disposition as could have been made: it is only inadequate so far, as that each of these constituencies ought to have had two members instead of one, except Birkenhead”. Stanley Diary, op. cit., February 14th, 1861.

Instead, a second M.P. was allocated to the West Riding.⁵⁶

This settlement satisfied nearly everyone, with the major exceptions being London and the metropolitan Radicals. The Conservatives were happy with an equal share of the spoils. Both parties had supported the legitimate claims of the most populous and deserving areas, three of the four available seats had gone to counties and the 1860s campaign of “Justice for the North” had been temporarily satiated with all four seats moving from relatively small, southern boroughs to large, northern industrial areas. Palmerston’s acceptance of the legitimate claims for Birkenhead to have its own M.P. was part and parcel of his general appeal to moderate Tory backbenchers. By-elections were held in Birkenhead and South Lancashire in 1861 in order to fill the third seat but the splitting of the West Riding did not take place electorally until 1865. The famous South Lancashire contest of 1865 nearly took place four years before but when the by-election was held in August, Gladstone decided to stay where he was.⁵⁷ The Tories won both the Lancashire by-elections held in 1861.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Stanley wrote:

“...Debate on appropriation of the four [vacant] seats resumed: the House got into confusion, a dozen plans being laid before it at once: Ministers would propose nothing: Disraeli interposed, but solely with the view of making mischief, and increasing the embarrassment: he wants to throw out the Bill altogether, for no reason except that its rejection would humiliate his opponents. Indeed, he acknowledged as much, and a rather sharp dispute arose between us: but it passed over, leaving us good friends. The proposition of giving a third member to Middlesex was thrown out, though supported by the Cabinet; Palmerston then announced that they would consent to the scheme of giving four members to the west Riding: this I was glad of, having supported it when proposed by Collins, though only about 80 members followed him into the lobby. Birkenhead does not seem to be opposed...” Stanley Diary, op. cit., June 17th, 1861. Thomas Collins, junior, was then Conservative M.P. for Knaresborough: see the chapter on the North, with the county entry for Yorkshire, for brief details of his political career.

⁵⁷ Phillimore noted in March:

“Globe announces that the new electoral district of Lancashire means to offer G. the representation...G’s final answer is that till the constituency is actually in esse & it be clear that the choice of him w[oul]d. entail no contest, he cannot consider the proposal so as to warrant him in communicating with his Ox[ford]. supporters; but he does not disguise his dislike to another contest at Ox[ford]. and the satisfaction wh[ic]h. he w[oul]d. fee; in representing the place of his birth”. Phillimore Diary, op. cit., March 12th, 1861.

⁵⁸ South Lancashire; August 19th, 1861: C. Turner (Con.) 9,714, J. Cheetham (Lib.) 8,898; Tory majority 816, electorate (1859) 19,433.

Birkenhead; December 11th, 1861: J. Laird (Con.) 1,643, T. Brassey (Lib.) 1,296; Tory majority 347, electorate (1861) 3,489.

When all four seats new seats were contested at the 1865 General Election, matters were rather different:

	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>1859</u>	<u>1865</u>
1	Birkenhead	N/A	1C
2	South Lancashire	2C	2C,1L
3	West Riding, Yorkshire	2L	N/A
	Northern Division	N/A	2L
	Southern Division	N/A	2L
	Totals	2C,2L	3C,5L

The overall effect of the changes was one Liberal gain or two if the 1861 by-election were to be included.

The various redistribution plans between 1858-61 led to Disraeli drawing two major conclusions. The first was that the Whigs would work, in the correct circumstances, with the Tories to stop change but they would always draw a line at working with the party to pass a measure of moderate reform. Secondly, that demagogic campaigns, such as Bright's in 1858-9, were controllable and were not the threat to the propertied classes that they might initially appear to be. The parliamentary situation during these years allowed Disraeli to show one of his cardinal political virtues, that of fidelity to party but the other qualities which set him apart from his contemporaries, bravery in adversity, risk-taking and courage in a hostile Parliament, had to wait until the next opportunity which began in autumn 1865. Although he never properly familiarised himself with regional, provincial and non-metropolitan Britain, he was not scared either by it, or by its representatives, in the Commons. Accommodation could best be realised by doing business with the spokesmen of the industrial, urban and commercial areas and communities in the House and thus "dishing the Whigs". Such an outcome took nigh on twenty years to bring about because of the electoral system in which he had to operate, the Tory split of 1846 followed by party diffidence in 1858-9 and Palmerston's longevity but the possibility was there throughout the period.

After 1861 there was little but foreign policy and some by-election successes to consider, such as at Windsor in November 1863.⁵⁹ When the General Election came in summer 1865, it was a grievous disappointment.⁶⁰ Derby gave his final verdict on the outcome the next month, when he wrote:

"I cannot, on any calculation, bring our number above 287 and I think 283 will prove nearer the mark...the utter rout of our party in Scotland and to the amount of democratic spirit which prevails there, a purely Conservative gov[ernment]. is all but hopeless, until, upon P[almerston]'s death...W.E.G. tries his hand with a Rad[ical].Gov[ernment], and alarms the middle class.

In this county, the stronghold of the R[oman]. C[atholic]s. (!), we have held our own, except in the S[outh]. Div[ision]. which is lost by Con[servative]s. splitting on W.E.G. There was indeed one R.C. lady who would not allow her servants to vote for us, because I had met Garibaldi at dinner and so she assists in returning Gladstone!!".⁶¹

The result confirmed that the existing distribution of seats and the borough franchise, in particular, had to be removed. Working-class voting in the towns and cities was unpredictable but not necessarily to be feared. Enfranchisement of Tory support and making it count could be achieved by redrawing the borough boundaries, sub-dividing the existing counties or county divisions and selectively choosing new boroughs. This creative element was substantially more important than overly fussing about a particular level of disfranchisement. There was a clear party aversion, a throwback to 1831-2, to removing small boroughs wholesale in a revised Schedule A but there was acceptance of the need for a new Schedule B, with population figures of between 5,000-15,000 as being negotiable. Thus the party could still claim to be the standard bearer of a constituency system based on "communities" and "interest". A traditional class based view of what politicians,

⁵⁹ Derby wrote percipiently:

"...the Windsor success...It is satisfactory in any way; if the Court influence was against us, the triumph was the greater; if it was neutral while we are in opposition we need not fear its being turned against us if we were in power...our prospects look well for a General Election in the Boroughs; but I confess I am apprehensive about some of the Counties; chiefly from the want of candidates. Bath sends me gloomy accounts from Wiltshire and East Somerset...I am by no means at ease about this Division...The Liverpool people say they hope...that W.E.G. may be the candidate; they would rather have him as an opponent than Pemberton Heywood". Derby to Disraeli, November 5th, 1863, H.P., Box 110/2, Ref. B/XX/S/315.

⁶⁰ In July Derby analysed the results as follows:

"I reckon our present loss at 23, and probable ultimate loss at 25..." Derby to Disraeli, July 24th, 1865, from St James's Square, H.P., Box 110/2, Ref. B/XX/S/334.

⁶¹ Derby to Disraeli, August 4th, 1865, from Knowsley, H.P., Box 110/2, Ref. B/XX/S/335.

especially thinking Tory ones, were considering about the electoral system in the mid-Victorian period, may need to be leavened with a slightly more radical seats based one as well.

Gladstonian Gerrymandering, 1866

A renewed seriousness about reform was apparent both during, and after, the 1864 parliamentary session. In May, Gladstone had made his “pale of the constitution” speech and Phillimore recorded shock, possibly genuine, at its impact.⁶² Neither the Chancellor’s visit to his potential new constituency in the autumn, nor what he said, did little to lessen Whig sensibilities.⁶³ During the 1865 session Disraeli tried to discover Liberal intentions and to sow division, where opportunity presented itself.⁶⁴ Palmerston’s victory in the summer General Election appeared to have kept the question at bay but his death in the autumn changed the whole political outlook.⁶⁵ Stanley had connections with the new Cabinet and kept Disraeli informed as to what was intended over redistribution.⁶⁶ Quite what the Conservative response to any Bill should be was fraught with complexities and as the situation evolved, tactics altered, if not on a daily basis, then certainly on a frequent one.⁶⁷ The new Liberal Government tried its own policy of “fusion”, attempting to detach the Tory left from the party by offering its young leader

⁶² “Second attack in [The] Times...went to G...and expressed openly my surprise at his speech, told him what everybody s[ai]d. He said he had been much surprised to find “he had set the Thames on fire”. “Are you come to see the great incendiary?”...Never meant anything like universal suffrage, the whole of his speech should be taken together”. Phillimore Diary, op. cit., May 1864.

⁶³ Bright commented:

“There is great anxiety among the Whigs to know what will be said by Gladstone during his coming visit to Lancashire...There is...a confident expectation that the reform question will experience a resurrection very soon and that the Liberal party must either settle it by carrying a measure, or be broken up”. Bright to J.B.Smith, October 3rd, 1864, J.B.Smith Papers.

⁶⁴ Derby wrote:

“...a motion which [Elcho] proposed to make for a Commission to enquire how far the present law shuts out the working class from the electoral body...Pray let me know how far he has your sanction. I confess I greatly doubt the policy of the step”. Derby to Disraeli, undated but before Palmerston’s death, from St. James’s Square, H.P., Box 110/2, Ref. B/XX/S/340.

⁶⁵ Stanley commented:

“The Reform crisis cannot now be delayed: there are at least 50 Conservatives on the Whig side: the question is, can we utilise them, and how?” Stanley to Disraeli, October 23rd, 1865, from Hatfield, H.P., Box 113/3, Ref. B/XX/S/722.

⁶⁶ He wrote:

“[Clarendon] seemed to think that the question of disfranchisement was that which would give most trouble”. Stanley to Disraeli, October 28th, 1865, H.P., Box 113/3, Ref. B/XX/S/723.

⁶⁷ “Three weeks ago, you and I both thought that a very small Bill, passed by Conservative support would be the best solution...now you are against any Bill”. Ibid., November 8th, 1865, H.P., Box 113/3, Ref. B/XX/S/725.

attractive inducements.⁶⁸ His father remained relaxed about the prospect of a Reform Bill, at least to begin with.⁶⁹

The franchise proposals, only, were eventually introduced to the Commons on March 12th, 1866 but without any scheme of redistribution attached.⁷⁰ Such an odd way of proceeding had the merit of dealing with one matter at a time and allowed Gladstone to use the threat of a harsh redistribution as a sword of Damocles hanging over the heads of the Whigs. Their agreement to the relatively modest franchise plans, perhaps enfranchising no more than 250,000 voters and leavened with additional qualifications for men of property, would allow the sword to be sheathed. On the other hand, a soft redistribution would disappoint the Radicals. Thus Gladstone kept his cards close to his chest. However, the danger he faced with this tactic was that the Whigs might not be cowed, would demand to see the whole reform picture and, in particular, the specific plans for the small boroughs. Not all Whigs, of course, sat for such seats but enough did so to allow them, for both reasons of altruism and self interest, to come to their defence. Hayter and Lowe, for instance, who led the Whig attack on the eventual redistribution and March franchise plans respectively, did.⁷¹ Much discussion and manoeuvring took place behind the scenes by the Franchise Bill's potential opponents to try and work out the best way to proceed. Care was required.⁷²

⁶⁸ "...Ld. Russell's offer to me extended to a second seat in Cabinet for a friend...an anti-reform manifesto would be premature, inconsistent with previous declarations and impolitic. But I have always acknowledged that you understand tactics better than I do". Ibid., November 16th, 1865, H.P., Box 113/3, Ref. B/XX/S/726.

⁶⁹ He wrote:

"I am less anxious about the Reform question; and I think they will either be allowed to shelve it or, more probably, bring in a Bill which will satisfy nobody. The country is not for extreme measures on that head". Derby to Disraeli, November 21st, 1865, H.P., Box 110/2, Ref. B/XX/S/337.

⁷⁰ The main franchise plans were for a £7 rental franchise in the boroughs and a £14 occupational one in the counties. The comparative existing ones were £10 and £50 from 1832.

⁷¹ Hayter was Liberal M.P. for Wells 1865-8 and Lowe Liberal M.P. for Calne 1859-68. Further details of their political careers are provided in the relevant constituency and county entries.

⁷² Grey wrote:

"...it is necessary to be very cautious how the opposition to the Gov[ernmen]t. measure is conducted. We must remember that it is not enough to defeat the measure for the moment...their temporary defeat would do more harm than good. Five and thirty years ago the triumph of the Reform Bill was mainly due to our defeat on Gen[eral]. Gascoigne's ill-advised resolution". 3rd Earl Grey to Disraeli, n.d., H.P., Box 126/2, Ref. B/XXI/E/ 130.

Disraeli initially took something of a back seat, leaving Grosvenor and Stanley to lead the parliamentary opposition.⁷³ The timing of his intervention in debate was an important consideration throughout the session, given the continuing political uncertainties.⁷⁴

A month after the introduction of the Franchise Bill, Grosvenor, seconded by Stanley, introduced his Resolution asking for details of the Government's redistribution scheme.⁷⁵ Disraeli had set the scene for this approach by earlier asking a series of questions about the possible principles behind the Liberal plans which, as they could not yet be answered, was the purpose of asking them. Support for Grosvenor grew due to developments both within and without the Commons. Without, Gladstone's speeches in Liverpool during the Easter recess antagonised the Adullamites.⁷⁶ Within, a similarly provocative speech was unwise.⁷⁷ Also, Clay, the maverick Liberal M.P. for Hull, introduced an Elective Franchise Bill, which would have created an educational test for voting. This infuriated Bright and irritated Palmer, both of whom responded with speeches of a more radical and intemperate nature. This, in its turn, further upset potential members of the Government's "Cave", who began to coalesce around Grosvenor and the redistribution question.⁷⁸

⁷³ Elcho wrote:

"...it would be better for [Grosvenor] to get up after Gladstone instead of Disraeli...we dread giving too Conservative an aspect to the opposition". Elcho to Stanley, April 12th, 1866, H.P., Box 113/3, Ref. B/XX/S/730.

⁷⁴ "From circumstances that have come to my knowledge it is essential...that you should speak after Gladstone this evening. I know that the enemy will do their best to prevent it". 2nd Earl Wilton to Disraeli, June 4th, 1866, H.P., Box 147/3, Ref. B/XXI/W/421.

⁷⁵ Stanley commented:

"We are asked...to make one alteration of the constituencies by the Franchise Bill in the present year...to alter them again next year by a redistribution of seats...to alter them a third time by a Boundaries Bill". *Parl. Deb.*, 3, vol.182, c. 1170, April 12th, 1866.

⁷⁶ Gladstone spoke at the Amphitheatre and the Philharmonic Hall. For the political context, see R. Shannon: "Gladstone, Heroic Minister, 1865-98", pp.18-24, 1999. Lowe commented:

"...and thus the baked meats of the Philharmonic Hall did coldly furnish forth the tables of the House of Commons".

⁷⁷ Elcho regarded Gladstone as "the man least fit to lead the...Commons". He wrote:

"In Gladstone, [Bright] had found a passionate, impulsive instrument. A man...who has been described as having all the impulsiveness of woman without her instinct". Elcho to Edward Ellice, n.d., April, 1866, Elcho Papers.

⁷⁸ "...Lowe [said] the Second Reading w[oul]d. still be gone on with before the 2nd Bill [on Redistribution] was laid on the table and "the want of respect to the House" was just the same-9to say nothing of a hundred other reasons)". Mary, Lady Salisbury to Disraeli, n.d., April 1866, H.P., Box 113/4, Ref. B/XX/S/1430.

Grosvenor's Amendment was just defeated by 318-313 votes at the end of April. Thirty-three Adullamites voted with the Opposition.⁷⁹ That Grosvenor and Stanley represented the interests of the smaller constituencies can be seen from the division list:

<u>Voting</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Property (£)</u>	<u>Electorate</u>
Ayes (anti-Grosvenor)	15,077,570	6,193,118	735,363
Noes (pro-Grosvenor)	13,102,116	3,712,116	608,749

Faced with this level of resistance, not exactly a peasants' revolt but certainly an aristocratic one, Gladstone conceded and finally introduced his redistribution proposals in early May.⁸⁰ Having to bring forward his plans in this way shut off one option available to him, the threat of an early dissolution.⁸¹ However, given the lateness of the redistribution plans, there was the distinct possibility of an autumn session.⁸² This was a cause for concern to the Bill's actual and potential opponents because it created the opportunity for gerrymandering.⁸³

Gladstone said that no single borough would be "absolutely extinguished" and that instead the grouping of boroughs, as seen in Scotland and Wales, would now be applied to England. Such a plan appealed to him on grounds of tradition and conservatism and to Russell on grounds of romantic remembrance from the halcyon days of 1831-2. Justification was, in part, ascribed to the purity of elections where voting occurred at "a plurality of places". He claimed that there had only been "one or two" Scottish election petitions from 1832-66 in contrast to the sad situation in England.⁸⁴ He planned that 49 seats would be redistributed, a

⁷⁹ The decision of whether or not to oppose had been finely balanced. Stanley wrote:

"...Conversation with Disraeli, Henley, Cairns, Lowe, Adderley, Mowbray etc. on the best course to be adopted. Lowe and Disraeli are for fighting...the rest in favour of a compromise if possible. D. says, "No matter how you modify the bill, it is still theirs, and not ours, and will give them the command of the boroughs for half-a-dozen years to come". Stanley Diary, op. cit., April 30th, 1866.

⁸⁰ *Parl. Deb.*, 3, vol. 183, col. 492, May 8th, 1866.

⁸¹ "...Redistribution...w[oul]d. mean a Boundary Commission wh[ic]h. w[oul]d. delay an election for a year or two". Hugessen to Russell, January 24th, 1866, Hugessen Papers.

⁸² Hardy commented:

"Yesterday...I staid at the House to hear Gladstone on...redistribution...It was a mere statement without attempt at a speech. A pleasant prospect of adjourning & meeting in Sept[embe]r. was held out to us". Hardy Diary, op. cit., May 8th, 1866.

⁸³ Elcho wrote:

"An autumn session would give [the Government] a practical dictatorship upon the question, as a great many men would be absent and the Government would always command their placemen and the Radicals". Elcho to Carnarvon, May 12th, 1866, Elcho Papers, Box XXVIII.

⁸⁴ In fact, four petitions had been presented: two from counties and two from the grouped boroughs.

figure nearer 1854 than 1860. Boroughs with populations under 8,000 would lose one M.P. and they would then be grouped, with the groups consisting of between two and four contributory boroughs. When the populations of such groups were under 15,000, they would have one M.P., when over, two.⁸⁵ The proposed groupings were:

<u>Number</u>	<u>Grouped Constituencies</u>	<u>Existing Number of M.P.s</u>	<u>Proposed Number of M.P.s</u>
1	Abingdon (1), Wallingford (1), Woodstock (1)	3	2
2	Andover (2), Lymington (2)	4	1
3	Arundel (1), Horsham (1), Midhurst (1), Petersfield (1)	4	2
4	Ashburton (1), Dartmouth (1), Totnes (2)	4	1
5	Bodmin (2), Launceston (1), Liskeard (1)	4	2
6	Bridport (2), Honiton (2), Lyme Regis (1)	5	1
7	Calne (1), Chippenham (2), Malmesbury (1)	4	2
8	Cirencester (2), Evesham (2), Tewkesbury (2)	6	2
9	Devizes (2), Marlborough (2)	4	1
10	Dorchester (2), Wareham (1)	3	1
11	Eye (1), Thetford (2)	3	1
12	Harwich (2), Maldon (2)	4	1
13	Knaresborough (2), Ripon (2), Thirsk (1)	5	2
14	Northallerton (1), Richmond (2)	3	1
15	Leominster (2), Ludlow (2)	4	1
16	Wells (2), Westbury (1)	3	1
Totals		63	22

These 16 groups were made up of 41 constituencies returning 63 M.P.s: 22 were double and 19 single member boroughs. They were to be reduced to just 22 M.P.s. In addition, eight double member boroughs, with populations under 8,000, were to be reduced to single status. They were:

Bridgnorth	Huntingdon
Buckingham	Lichfield
Cockermouth	Marlow
Hertford	Newport

⁸⁵ The populations ranged from 10,000-21,000.

The enfranchisement proposals were in five separate categories:

<u>Number</u>	<u>Type of Constituency</u>	<u>Additional Seats</u>
1	County/County Divisions	26
2	Old Boroughs	7
3	New Boroughs	8
4	Scotland	6
5	Universities	2
Total		49

Every county or county division, not already returning three M.P.s, with a population of 150,000 or above, according to the 1861 Census, would be given one extra member. This figure excluded the population of the parliamentary boroughs and of the towns to be newly enfranchised. The details were:

	<u>County</u>	<u>Division</u>	<u>Existing Number of M.P.s</u>	<u>Proposed Number of M.P.s</u>
1	Lancashire	South	3	0
2		South East	0	3
3		South West	0	3
4	Cheshire	North	2	3
5		South	2	3
6	Cornwall	West	2	3
7	Derbyshire	North	2	3
8	Devon	North	2	3
9		South	2	3
10	Durham	North	2	3
11		South	2	3
12	Essex	North	2	3
13		South	2	3
14	Kent	East	2	3
15		West	2	3
16	Lancashire	North	2	3
17	Lincolnshire		2	3
18	Norfolk	West	2	3
19	Somerset	East	2	3
20		West	2	3
21	Staffordshire	North	2	3
22		South	2	3
23	Surrey	East	2	3
24	Yorkshire	North Riding	2	3
25		West Riding (N)	2	3
26		West Riding (S)	2	3
	Totals		49	75

The clear omission was Middlesex, which Gladstone said he did not see as being a proper county but as part of Greater London. In reality, he realised that a Middlesex deprived of Chelsea and Kensington would become Tory, as indeed it did. The planned increase for both the old and new boroughs was:

	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Existing Number of M.P.s</u>	<u>Proposed Number of M.P.s</u>
1	Tower Hamlets (to be divided)	647,845	2	4
2	Birmingham	296,076	2	3
3	Leeds	207,165	2	3
4	Liverpool	443,938	2	3
5	Manchester	357,979	2	3
6	Salford	102,449	1	2
	<i>Sub-totals</i>		11	18
1	Chelsea and Kensington	174,000	0	2
2	Burnley	45,000	0	1
3	Dewsbury	49,750	0	1
4	Gravesend	27,500	0	1
5	Hartlepool	27,475	0	1
6	Middlesbrough	46,000	0	1
7	Stalybridge	35,114	0	1
	<i>Sub-totals</i>		0	8
	Totals		11	26

The Scottish and University seats to be enfranchised were:

<u>Scotland</u>	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Existing Number of M.P.s</u>	<u>Proposed Number of M.P.s</u>
<u>Boroughs</u>			
1	Edinburgh	2	3
2	Glasgow	2	3
3	Dundee	1	2
<u>Counties</u>			
1	Aberdeenshire	1	2
2	Ayrshire	1	2
3	Lanarkshire	1	2
<u>Universities</u>			
1	London	0	1
2	Scottish	0	1
Totals		8	16

Over the boundaries' issue, Gladstone foreshadowed his approach of 1868, just as Disraeli had in 1859. Whereas the latter had wanted to extend the parliamentary boundaries in order to take in the outlying areas, thus relieving the counties of urban over-spill, the former wanted to keep the boundaries limited to the municipal borough. An Enclosure Commission would be created to determine the boundaries of the new boroughs and those of the old ones would be reduced to the municipality only. The theoretical justification for this policy of limitation was to halt the "artificial" enlargement of small boroughs by adding semi-rural areas that more properly belonged to the counties. The real reason was to retain urban voters in the counties. In Liberal language this meant keeping them "independent" or "mixed", in Tory terminology this implied making them "dissenting" or "swamped" by town residents.

The overall redistribution scheme added to Whig fears and posed a grave threat to Tory interests. However, grouping as a principle was not popular and offered a possible escape route.⁸⁶

Baxter then forwarded to Disraeli the outcome of his detailed and meticulous analysis.⁸⁷ The next day he began work on his newspaper article about redistribution, which when completed became the best published critique of what was intended. He wrote:

"The Times want[s] article on Redistribution Bill.

I think of writing a short summary of the shortcomings of their grouping scheme and to point out that it will be the turn of the boroughs between 8,000-16,000, - 69 in number – in the next Reform agitation...

The publication just before the Whitsun holidays may supply our friends facts for use in the country.

⁸⁶ Before his departure from the Government, Earle wrote:

"...the feeling will be general against grouping at all- the small borough interest will be against the grouping of represented towns- the Liberals against the grouping of unrepresented- and others will have a strong prejudice against the thing, as being Scotch". Earle to Disraeli, n.d., 1866, H.P., Box 97/2, Ref. B/XX/E/412.

⁸⁷ He wrote:

"I send you a map which gives a complete idea of the grouping question. The Boroughs grouped are in Red and named. The unrepresented towns in Mr. Sandford's Return with population[s] over 5,000 are Blue. The new Boroughs have a red circle around the blue. The present boroughs are the thin Green circle. The grouped boroughs are connected with each other by red straight lines with the distances marked.

The grouping appears unpopular even with the Liberals. No borough likes to lose its individuality and it may be a point as open to attack in this Bill, as the abolition of borough freeholders was, for a similar reason, in your Bill [of 1859]." Baxter to Disraeli, May 12th and 14th, 1866, H.P., Box 44/1, Ref. B/XI/D/50-1.

Would you like to have the Welsh and Scotch boroughs put upon your map?”⁸⁸

Baxter was by no means the only source of advice for Disraeli. He received many letters containing information about the effect of the Liberal proposals on individual counties and constituencies.⁸⁹ The Tory leaders were quick to realise the implications for the party and set out to destroy the Bill.⁹⁰ However, the party had to remain united in its opposition to the proposals and this could not be taken for granted, making tactical procedure complex and difficult.⁹¹

Disraeli's parliamentary response was restrained, moderate and traditional. He argued that “various interests and individuals” were represented by the small boroughs containing, as they did, Indian, colonial and manufacturing service and achievement. Because the combined effects of the Liberal proposals would affect as many as 71 out of the 155 small borough M.P.s, Disraeli termed them “disfranchisement in disguise”. Such an eventuality would lead to “a feeble and imperfect local representation”. He said:

“The proposition for grouping places already represented would be to realise a grave anomaly by a process of wanton injustice...The grouping of unrepresented places would...introduce popular and vigorous elements”.

This, he believed, would be a better way by which new communities, which had sprung up since 1832, could enjoy representation. Additional M.P.s for large towns, such as Leeds and Manchester, were unnecessary.

⁸⁸ Baxter to Disraeli, May 15th, 1866, H.P., Box 44/1, Ref. B/XI/D/55.

⁸⁹ One example only must suffice:

“...nearly 100,000 [voters] will be added to the entire county constituency.

...the present Bill is aimed almost exclusively at the county constituency. Mr. Nicholls Roberts, the secretary of the Liberal Registration Society, is thoroughly conversant with the condition of every county and can estimate accurately the effect of every change. The peculiar way in which the present Bill is drawn up, adding the leaseholders and purposely leaving all suburbs unincorporated in the neighbouring boroughs strengthens the above suspicion”. Colleton Rennie to Disraeli, May 14th, 1866, H.P., Box 44/1, Ref. B/XI/D/52.

⁹⁰ “...Derby and Disraeli are so well aware of the effect of the Bill, if passed, that their only object is to stop it”. Elcho to Gregory, May 19th, 1866, Elcho Papers, Box XXXI.

⁹¹ “There has been amongst the Conservative members a danger of a split between town and country, each threatening to make its own terms with the enemy if occasion required...” Elcho to Carnarvon, May 12th, 1866, Elcho Papers, Box XXVIII.

Disraeli wanted the Bill withdrawn, more accurate statistics for both counties and boroughs to be prepared and the matter to be resubmitted in 1867.⁹²

There were obvious difficulties and weaknesses with the Liberal plans but Disraeli's real concern was to get the unrepresented towns out of the counties. The diarists provided clear evidence of private Tory concern. Hardy wrote:

"The scheme most smashing though without absolute disfranchisement. A group of Boroughs is taken & one or two Members given for the whole wh[ic]h. perhaps has now 4 to 6, e.g. Leominster and Ludlow, 1 for 4".⁹³

Baxter's provisional analysis of a loss of c. 20 seats was corroborated separately.⁹⁴

The lead in opposing the plans was taken by the Adullamites, provoked by the combination of a too low borough franchise, the grouping scheme and the concomitant loss of the small seats and Gladstone's inept Commons' leadership. Hayter's Amendment against grouping was tabled on May 28th.⁹⁵ He was

⁹² See: "The Annual Register", May 1866 and M. Corry, editor, "Disraeli: Speeches on Parliamentary Reform, 1848-66", 1867. There is also a collection of Gladstone's speeches for 1866 (but not for 1867-8) entitled: "Speeches on Parliamentary Reform in 1866". There is an article on both sets of speeches by F.B.Smith: "Democracy in the Second Reform Debates", *Historical Studies in Australia and New Zealand*, xi, (1963-5), pp. 306-23.

⁹³ Hardy Diary, op. cit., May 8th, 1866.

Stanley's Diary from May 6th-11th, 1866, has a series of entries on the issue, which outlined some of the complexities faced by the leadership:

"...Long conference with Disraeli: but we did not agree: he is eager to turn out the government...I soon saw that to discuss the possibility of compromise with him would be labour lost...To suppose that he can see Gladstone's success with pleasure would be absurd...it is only human nature that he should look more to a personal triumph over a rival, than to the permanent effect of what he does on the party or principle which he represents. [May 6th]

Meeting of Conservative members...a decision taken to oppose the second reading of the Seats Bill, Walpole, Henley and I being the only dissentients...Disraeli's fixed idea is to bring his party into office, no matter for how short a term...[May 8th]

...the intended opposition to the second reading of Seats Bill is withdrawn: Taylor...found so many indisposed to join in the attack that he came to the conclusion that it would be imprudent...We have...until after Whitsuntide to consider our cause. [May 9th]

Meeting at Lord Salisbury's, of Conservative members of the H. of C....Ld. D...deprecated action on the second reading of the Seats Bill, on the ground that we were not all united...I did not note on Tuesday [May 8th] that the meeting then held was private, only fifteen or sixteen being present: that of today was a general gathering, about two hundred attended. The feeling very cordial towards both Ld. D and Disraeli - which last year it was not always". [May 11th]

Right in the middle of the internal party debate over what to do, Stanley found time to have breakfast with Gladstone (and others) on May 10th, though he did acknowledge that the occasion was "rather stiff".

⁹⁴ "...it really seems entirely suicidal on the part of the Conservatives to consent to the passing of this Bill...I have today made out a table which I...send you". W. Beckett Denison to Disraeli, May 13th, 1866, H.P., Box 124/4, Ref. B/XXI/D/186.

⁹⁵ "Young Hayter...has given notice...disapproving of the Government's redistribution scheme...He has done this...in consequence of a letter from his father disapproving the scheme in the strongest terms...the small Boro[ugh]s. determined on a fight last night". Elcho to 3rd Earl Grey, May 26th, 1866, Elcho Papers.

seconded by Anson after Walpole was approached but he declined.⁹⁶ Hayter highlighted, in some detail, the peculiarities and inconsistencies in Gladstone's grouping plan and he, also, tabulated his own changes, many of which seemed to make much greater sense than Gladstone's. Although there is nothing written to that effect, it would be odd if he had not, to some extent, liaised with Baxter, as he was not particularly known for being the Adullamite psephologist.⁹⁷

There were three main criticisms: the unnecessary and novel proposal, for English seats, of crossing county boundaries, the huge distances involved in the planned groups and the clear party gerrymandering evidenced in how the constituencies were linked and in what was left undone. Not a single group escaped criticism. The predominantly Sussex group of boroughs drew upon it particularly severe criticism for going into Hampshire, linking together towns with no community of interests and for the large geographical distances involved. This last factor was important because it would add hugely to the cost of elections, make proper representation impossible and lead to grouped seats on this scale becoming the playgrounds of the rich only. Hayter's actual, or pretended, sense of Whig incorruptibility then led him to attack the retention of the nomination boroughs above the artificial population level of 8,000, some of them being by-words for venality and corruption. They were:

	<u>Population</u> <u>8,000-10,000</u>	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Population</u> <u>10,000-15,000</u>	<u>Electorate</u>
1	Chichester	562	Barnstaple	715
2	Guildford	667	Berwick-on-Tweed	731
3	Lewes	676	Bridgwater	644
4	Malton	600	Sandwich	1,054
5	Poole	521	Stafford	1,540
6	Stamford	512	Weymouth	906
7	Tavistock	426		
8	Windsor	651		
9	Wycombe ⁹⁸	551		

⁹⁶ "I must decline to second Captain Hayter...My position with regard to Reform is so peculiar that I am sure I must...keep myself in the background as much as possible". Walpole to Noel, May 25th, 1866, H.P., Box 137/4.

⁹⁷ Hayter's parliamentary career is outlined in the Somerset part of the South West chapter but he had only been in the Commons since 1865.

⁹⁸ Hayter suggested that size of electorate might be a more appropriate discriminator for disfranchisement as the population figures were from the 1861 Census but the Electoral Returns were for 1865-6.

At the eleventh hour Gladstone made concessions over both the proceedings during the Committee Stage of the Bill and his redistribution plans. This led to Elcho having second thoughts.⁹⁹ Grosvenor then decided to speak against Hayter which effectively led to his motion being withdrawn.¹⁰⁰

From the end of May until mid-June, a series of votes largely at the Committee Stage indicated that the Bill was still in some trouble, though all the Opposition amendments and the one Instruction could, in themselves, have been regarded as relatively minor.¹⁰¹ The tactical intention was to highlight and publicise rather than to defeat.¹⁰² The Conservatives remained largely united due to Derby's appeals for loyalty and party solidarity and Disraeli's electoral understanding of what the Liberal Government intended and his parliamentary skills at exploiting potential division.¹⁰³ The Tory leadership was well aware that it might not be able to halt the Reform Bills in the Commons. There were plans afoot to sabotage matters in the Lords, though this was clearly risky and needed to be carefully considered. Derby explained:

⁹⁹ Elcho wrote:

"I should not be in favour of a division on Hayter. We have grounds enough for saying that the belief that the Bill will somehow not be proceeded with in Committee has influenced many men who otherwise w[oul]d. vote for the Amendment, and a division upon it w[oul]d. therefore be no test of the real feeling of the House". Elcho to Disraeli, June 2nd, 1866, H.P., Box 126/2, Ref. B/XXI/E/125.

¹⁰⁰ Stanley commented a little later:

"...Grosvenor, who carried the failure of Hayter's motion by his speech against it, makes no secret of regretting the course he took..." Diary, op. cit., June 8th, 1866.

This was an important change of opinion:

"Grosvenor came here last night full of y[ou]r. speech and I think when the time comes we shall find him right in action as he is in opinion...Elcho to Disraeli, May 15th, 1866, H.P., Box 126/2, Ref. B/XXI/E/122.

¹⁰¹ They were:

May 28th: **Knightley**: Instruction that bribery and corruption should be added to the two Government Bills, passed 248-238.

June 7th: **Walpole**: County franchise qualification to be raised from £14-£20, defeated 297-283.

June 11th: **Ward Hunt**: County franchise to be changed from rental to rateable value, effectively raising the rental qualification to £16, defeated 280-273. Procedural votes in support of this Amendment were also defeated by 303-254 and by 254-212.

June 13th: **Stanley**: Clause 4 on the county franchise to be postponed, redistribution to be taken first, defeated 287-260.

June 14th: **Banks Stanhope**: Removal of non-occupation of property as bar to voting for county franchise, defeated 361-74.

¹⁰² "I apprehend that it will be desirable, in Committee, to bring forward as many amendments in a Conservative direction as we can. If not carried, they may be ventilated and discussed, and...sink into the public mind". Sir John Benn Walsh to Disraeli, May 2nd, 1866, H.P., Box 146/4, Ref. B/XXI/W/92.

¹⁰³ Elcho commented on this:

"I have had two long talks with Dizzy... [he] has been as stout as possible throughout..." Elcho to Carnarvon, May 12th, 1866, Elcho Papers.

“...the invitation is to consider the best mode of throwing out the Bill, and not the Gov[er]nmen[t]...marking as hopeful those with O, and the others according to the nos. of Xs attached to their name.

List of Peers, whom L[or]d. Lansdowne thinks of inviting to Lansdowne Ho[use]. For conference on the present state of affairs.

Dukes		Marquesses	
Grafton	XX	Lansdowne	XXX
Newcastle	X?	Westminster	XX
Wellington	XX	Camden	X
Cleveland	X?	Visc[oun]ts.	
Earls		Stratford de Redcliffe	X
Suffolk	X?	Calthorpe	?X
Shaftesbury	X	Carrington L[or]d.	XX
Scarboro[ugh].	X?	Glasgow E[arl].	X?
Fitzwilliam	X	Rosebery E[arl].	O
Spencer	O	Stratheden L[or]d.	X
Wicklow	O	Portman L[or]d.	X?
Grey	X?	Vivian L[or]d.	X?
Harrowby	X?	Overstone L[or]d.	X
Somers	O	??Aveland L[or]d.	XX
Lichfield	XXX	??Llanover L[or]d.	X ¹⁰⁴
Yarboro[ugh].	X		
Leicester	X		
Zetland	X		
Dudley	XX		

However, before the Bills proceeded to the Lords, there was one more vote, that of Dunkellin's Amendment, to be taken in the Commons. He proposed an upping of the borough franchise voting qualification from £6 rental to £7 rating.¹⁰⁵ The Government lost the vote on June 19th by 315-304. The Tory Chief whip wrote:

¹⁰⁴ Derby to Disraeli, June 10th, 1866, H.P., Box 110/2, Refs. B/XX/S/345 and 345a. For Derby's leadership of the House of Lords, see A. Hawkins, "A Host in Himself": Lord Derby and Aristocratic Leadership" in Richard W. Davis, editor, "Leaders in the Lords 1765-1902", Parliamentary History, Edinburgh, 2003.

¹⁰⁵ Stanley commented:

"House at 4.30, where debate on the substitution of rating for rental as a test of value in the franchise bill. This created unusual interest, for two reasons: (1) it was known that ministers would be strongly opposed on their own side, and thought probable that they might be beaten, (2) if the amendment were lost it became certain that the franchise bill as a whole must pass the H. of C., and in the Lords its alteration was too doubtful to be reckoned with. The actual change involved was moreover considerable, £7 of rated value being equal to £8 10s. when estimated by rental: thus the effect of the change would be materially to limit the proposed extension of the suffrage". Diary, op. cit., June 18th, 1866.

“...the division list...is comprised as follows. We voted 275, there were 10 pairs, 2 were absent and Hertford is vacant...making our entire number 288. 42 Adullamites voted with us...”¹⁰⁶

Stanley commented:

“...the old Whig families, do not conceal their satisfaction: the want of tact, temper and extreme haughtiness of their leader has alienated from him all that class: they feel that while he remains at the head, the radical element in their party predominates”.¹⁰⁷

Gladstone’s perception of events was oddly different:

“He thought W. Patten & his 8 (or 6) moderate friends responsible for the rejection of the Bill & told W.P. so”.¹⁰⁸

Following the defeat all possibilities were aired, and rumoured, with dissolution certainly one of the options, as passed on to Disraeli.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Taylor to Disraeli, June 19th, 1866, H.P., Box 114/1, Ref. B/XX/T/69.

¹⁰⁷ Stanley Diary, op. cit., June 19th, 1866.

¹⁰⁸ Phillimore Diary, op. cit., September 28th, 1866. Gladstone’s reference to Wilson Patten is peculiar. He was not a Tory renegade nor did 6-8 Conservatives switch sides in 1866, as they were to do in 1867. He was the party Nestor in Lancashire and was rewarded for his loyalty to Derby over many years and his electoral successes in the county during the 1868-74 period, with his creation as Baron Winmarleigh by Disraeli in 1874. Putting to one side the widely held Conservative view that Gladstone was unbalanced and that this was evidence of it, there are letters to Gladstone in the British Library, covering the years from 1843-84, from Wilson Patten. Clearly, if Gladstone was serious about relying on Tory rebels for support in 1866, when there were not any, then he was indeed in some political trouble.

¹⁰⁹ “The gov[ernmen]t. people here assert positively that a dissolution is decided & will take place...all say that G. & R. are regardless of consequences & quite prepared to do anything to retain power... a great no. of supporters of gov[ernmen]t... do not like 2 elections within 12 months...there is an intrigue going on to get someone to propose a vote of confidence on Monday...The Gov[ernmen]t. hacks [want]...a personal friend of Gladstone...Crawford...to do it. Bouverie has also been talked of. I believe G. & R. are desperate enough for anything and that they will dissolve...They will keep in office at any cost.

The gov[ernmen]t. are afraid of an address from both Houses of Parliament to the Crown against a dissolution. I have heard several of their supporters say that they would vote for it & that it would be sure to be carried.

The gov[ernmen]t. people are industriously spreading the statement that if the Conservatives come in they will dissolve early next Spring & that, therefore, the dissolution may a swell be now”. Sir George Bowyer to Disraeli, June 28th, 1866, H.P., Box 119/3, Ref. B/XXI/B/713.

However, after a week of dithering and uncertainty, Russell's Government did not dissolve and finally resigned on June 27th.¹¹⁰ Berkeley, the secret ballot advocate and Bristol M.P., explained why no dissolution took place:

"If Gladstone had dissolved Parliament, the Tories would have had with them every Whig proprietor as well as Tory, of every close Borough- you cannot expect men to upset their seats, they won't do it.

Mr. Bright, too, has contrived to frighten all wavering Whigs into Tories and the meeting here of 100,000, of which number there might have been 50,000 true working men, 30,000 nondescripts and 10,000 thieves, burglars, garroters and ticket of leave men, and 10,000 more whom the police cannot account for..."¹¹¹

Dunkellin did not live to enjoy his place in history: he committed suicide shortly afterwards in 1867.¹¹² As for Gladstone, there is no particular hint in Phillimore's Diary that as the Bill and the Government were both Russell's ultimate responsibility, defeat on this scale might hasten the ex-Chancellor to the party leadership.¹¹³

On any rational assessment an incoming Derby administration would be short lived and would be very unlikely to take up reform and redistribution in any way positive enough to satisfy the Commons, yet avoid party disintegration. The key work in convincing the Tory leaders that the effort must be made, if only in a negative sense to block a second, reunited Liberal Bill in 1867-8, was Baxter's analyses, both published and private.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Stanley commented:

"During the last three days, the general expectation has been that a vote of confidence...would be proposed by some friend of theirs...Crawford was named as likely...It now appears that they reject all such offers to extricate them from the awkwardness of their position..." Diary, op. cit., June 25th, 1866. Crawford was then one of the members for the City: for details, see the entry for Middlesex in the London chapter.

¹¹¹ F.H.F.Berkeley to G.Parsons, October 2nd, 1866, National Liberal Club Papers, Bristol University Library, Special Collections, Ref. DM 1621. Parsons was a local Bristol Liberal. Berkeley finished his letter by saying:

"At present the H[ouse]. of C[ommons]. Is returned by the House of Lords, by the landocracy and by a wealthy oligarchy".

¹¹² Lord Ulrick Canning Dunkellin, 1827-67; eldest son of 1st Marquis of Clanricarde.

¹¹³ The only comment was:

"Gov[ernmen]t. out...It is clear that the refraining from a dissolution has been a peace offering to the old aristocratic Whigs, e.g. Ld. Zetland etc. It is to be hoped...G. will lead the whole party in opposition". Phillimore Diary, op. cit., June 26th, 1866.

¹¹⁴ The slightly more sanitised public version was R. Dudley Baxter: "The Redistribution of Seats and the Counties", London, 1866.

He had written the following memorandum in the spring:

“Where a third Member is given [in the Government scheme] it is assumed that he will represent the party in a minority at the last election. In some Counties it is possible that all 3 seats may be gained by Conservatives, but on the other hand it is more than probable that all the additional Members given to 6 English or 3 Scotch Boroughs will be Liberals, or that 6 out of the 8 representatives of New Boroughs will also be Liberals.

In this table the probabilities as to future Representatives have been reckoned upon the returns of the Election in July 1865, the weight being given to that side of politics whose candidate stood first on the poll.

On the whole it is believed, with the knowledge one has of the local circumstances in each case, that the result arrived at will be found pretty correct—and if so, it must be apparent that the power of the Conservative Party in the House of Commons will be nullified by the proposed Redistribution of Seats, if it passes”.¹¹⁵

These were the statistical details presented to Disraeli and they were the ones on which he and Derby planned their response. Baxter produced eight separate schedules, dealing with the separate categories of constituency changes.

¹¹⁵ Baxter to Disraeli, n.d., spring 1866, H.P., Box 45/1, Ref. B/XI/F/5. Obviously, it is possible to disagree with some of Baxter’s projections and, if the General Election results from 1859 were also to be included, the analysis would be a little different.

The first, Schedule A dealt with the grouped boroughs:

	<u>Constituency Groups</u>	<u>Existing Number of M.P.s per Group</u>	<u>General Election Results, 1865</u>	<u>Proposed Number of M.P.s per Group, 1866</u>	<u>Likely Electoral Outcome of Proposed Groups</u>	<u>Baxter's Estimated Effect of Proposals</u>
1	Abingdon}	1	1C			
	Wallingford}	1	1L			
	Woodstock}	1(3)	1C(2C,1L)	2	1C,1L	-1C
2	Bodmin}	2	2L			
	Launceston}*}	1	1C			
	Liskeard}*}	1(4)	1L(1C,3L)	2	2L	-1C,-1L
3	Ashburton}*}	1	1L			
	Dartmouth}*}	1	1C			
	Totnes}	2(4)	2L(1C,3L)	1	1L	-1C,-2L
4	Bridport}*}	2	2L			
	Honiton}	2	1C,1L			
	Lyme Regis}	1(5)	1C(2C,3L)	1	1L	-2C,-2L
5	Dorchester}	2	1C,1L			
	Wareham}	1(3)	1L(1C,2L)	1	1L	-1C,-1L
6	Harwich}	2	2C			
	Maldon}	2(4)	2C(4C)	1	1C	-3C
7	Cirencester}	2	2C			
	Evesham}	2	1C,1L			
	Tewkesbury}	2(6)	2C(5C,1L)	2	2C	-3C,-1L
8	Andover}*}	2	1C,1L			
	Lymington}	2(4)	1C,1L(2C,2L)	1	1L	-2C,-1L
9	Leominster}	2	2C			
	Ludlow}	2(4)	2C(4C)	1	1C	-3C
10	Eye}*}	1	1C			
	Thetford}	2(3)	1C,1L(2C,1L)	1	1C	-1C,-1L
11	Arundel}*}	1	1L			
	Horsham}	1	1L			
	Midhurst}*}	1	1C			
	Petersfield}*}	1(4)	1C(2C,2L)	2	1C,1L	-1C,-1L
12	Calne}*}	1	1L			
	Chippenham}	2	2C			
	Malmesbury}	1(4)	1L(2C,2L)	2	1C,1L	-1C,-1L
13	Wells}*}	2	1C,1L			
	Westbury}*}	1(3)	1C(2C,1L)	1	1C	-1C,-1L
14	Devizes}*}	2	2C			
	Marlborough}*}	2(4)	2L(2C,2L)	1	1C	-1C,-2L
15	Knaresborough}	2	1C,1L			
	Ripon}	2	2L			
	Thirsk}*}	1(5)	1C(2C,3L)	2	1C,1L	-1C,-2L
16	Northallerton}	1	1C			
	Richmond}*}	2(3)	2L(1C,2L)	1	1L	-1C,-1L
	Totals	63	35C,28L	22	11C,11L	-24C,-17L

Schedule B was the eight, double member, non grouped boroughs, with populations under 8,000, all of which would lose their second M.P., taking the number of seats available for redistribution to 49:

	<u>Borough</u>	<u>General Election Results, 1865</u>	<u>Baxter's Estimated Effect of Proposals</u>
1	Bridgnorth	1C,1L	1C
2	Buckingham*	1C,1L	1L
3	Cockermouth*	1C,1L	1L
4	Hertford*	1C,1L	1L
5	Huntingdon*	2C	1C
6	Lichfield	1L,1C	1L
7	Marlow*	2C	1C
8	Newport	1L,1C	1L
	Totals	10C,6L¹¹⁶	3C,5L

Schedule C was the seven additional seats given to the large boroughs:

	<u>Borough</u>	<u>Existing Number of M.P.s</u>	<u>Proposed Number of M.P.s</u>	<u>General Election Results, 1865</u>	<u>Baxter's Estimated Effect of Proposals</u>
1	Birmingham*	2	3	2L	+1C
2	Leeds	2	3	1C,1L	+1C
3	Liverpool	2	3	2C	+1L
4	Manchester	2	3	2L	+1C
5	Salford*	1	2	1L	+1L
6	Tower Hamlets*	2	4	2L	+2L
	Totals	11	18	3C,8L	+3C,+4L

¹¹⁶ Where there were contests, the result is given in order of winning candidate.

Schedule D was the additional seats for the English counties:

	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Existing Number of M.P.s</u>	<u>Proposed Number of M.P.s</u>	<u>General Election Results, 1865</u>	<u>Baxter's Estimated Effect of Proposals</u>
1	Cheshire, North*	2	3	2C	+1C
2	Cheshire, South*	2	3	2C	+1C
3	Cornwall, West*	2	3	2L	+1L
4	Derbyshire, North*	2	3	2L	+1C
5	Devon, North*	2	3	1C,1L	+1C
6	Devon, South*	2	3	2C	+1C
7	Durham, North	2	3	2L	+1C
8	Durham, South	2	3	1C,1L	+1L
9	Essex, North	2	3	1C,1L	+1C
10	Essex, South	2	3	2C	+1L
11	Kent, East	2	3	1C,1L	+1C
12	Kent, West	2	3	2C	+1C
13	Lancashire, North*	2	3	1C,1L	+1C
14	Lancashire, South	3	0	2C,1L	N/A
15	Lancashire South East	0	3	N/A	+1C,1L
16	Lancashire South West	0	3	N/A	+1C
17	Lincolnshire, North* ¹¹⁷	2	3	1C,1L	+1C
18	Norfolk, West	2	3	2C	+1L
19	Somerset, East*	2	3	2C	+1L
20	Somerset, West*	2	3	2C	+1L
21	Staffordshire, North	2	3	1C,1L	+1C
22	Staffordshire, South*	2	3	2L	+1C
23	Surrey, East	2	3	2L	+1C
24	Yorkshire, North Riding	2	3	1C,1L	+1L
25	Yorkshire, West Riding, Northern Division*	2	3	2L	+1C
26	Yorkshire, West Riding, Southern Division	2	3	2L	+1C
	Totals	49	75	26C,23L	+18C,+8L

¹¹⁷ Kesteven and Holland.

Schedule E was for the proposed new borough seats:

	<u>New Constituency</u>	<u>Proposed Number of M.P.s</u>	<u>Baxter's Estimated Effect of Proposals</u>
1	Chelsea and Kensington	2	2L
2	Burnley	1	1L
3	Dewsbury	1	1L
4	Gravesend	1	1C
5	Hartlepool	1	1C
6	Middlesbrough	1	1L
7	Sallybridge	1	1L
	Totals	8	2C,6L

The three remaining Schedules F, G and H were for Ireland, Scotland and London University and can be taken together as little change would result from the proposals. They were:

	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Existing Number of M.P.s</u>	<u>Proposed Number of M.P.s</u>	<u>General Election Results, 1865</u>	<u>Baxter's Estimated Effect of Proposals</u>
	Ireland				
1	Cork, County	2	3	1C,1L	+1L
2	Dublin, City	2	3	1C,1L	+1C
3	Queen's University	0	1	N/A	+1L
4	Athlone }	1		1L	
	Portarlington }	1	1	1L	-1L
5	Bandon }	1		1C	
	Kinsale }	1	1	1L	-1L
6	Dungannon }*	1		1C	
	Enniskillen }	1	1	1C	-1C
	Sub-totals	10	10	5C,5L	Nil
	Scotland				
	<u>Counties</u>				
1	Aberdeenshire*	1	2	1C	+1C
2	Ayrshire*	1	2	1C	+1C
3	Lanarkshire*	1	2	1L	+1L
	<u>Boroughs</u>				
1	Dundee*	1	2	1L	+1L
2	Edinburgh	2	3	2L	+1C
3	Glasgow	2	3	2L	+1C
	<u>Other</u>				
1	Scottish Universities	0	1	N/A	+1L
	Sub-totals	8	15	2C,6L	+4C,+3L
	English University				
1	London	0	1	N/A	+1L
	Totals	18	26	7C,11L	+4C,+4L

Baxter's conclusion was as follows:

<u>Schedule</u>	<u>Conservative Gain/Loss</u>
A	-7
B	-6
C	-1
D	+10
E	-4
F	N/A
G	+1
H	-1
<i>Sub-total</i>	+11,-19
Total	-8

The Irish and Scottish plans were miniscule by comparison with the sweeping proposals for the small English boroughs. The Irish changes, in particular, were largely tokenism. No change was to be made to the total of 105 M.P.s. Six small boroughs were to be grouped in order to create three additional seats: one extra for both County Cork and Dublin City, one new one for the Queen's University. There was no party change involved. As for Scotland, an increase of seven was the lowest possible offer to assuage Scottish feeling and was way below Liberal expectation in the country. Baxter's assessment of these plans for the Tories was surprisingly positive.

The overall loss of eight Tory seats also meant the same number of Liberal gains.¹¹⁸ The Conservative losses in the grouped and smaller boroughs were offset, to some extent, by the plans for the counties. If these proposals had come to pass, they probably would have succeeded in keeping the Liberals in power for the next political generation, just as had happened with the existing one. Such an outcome for the Tories was narrowly averted by little more than a chapter of accidents. For Derby and Disraeli, Gladstone and Russell, in that order, were the guilty men who had set out to gerrymander the constituencies in a blatantly Liberal direction. Derby described the 1866 Redistribution Bill, in part, as:

“...the extinction of the Conservative party...”¹¹⁹

Support for such a view came in, also, from the localities. The most detailed was from Yorkshire analysing the effect of the Whig gerrymandering within the

¹¹⁸ If anything, this was a little on the low side and a figure of 20 could be arrived at.

¹¹⁹ Derby to Adderley, May 10th, 1866, Derby Papers, 190/2, quoted in Cowling, op. cit., p. 70.

county. Disraeli's unidentified correspondent wrote that the 1866 Bill would finish the Conservatives off and that at the next General Election the party would be reduced to 150 M.P.s only:

"You are fighting ably the 'Waterloo' of Conservatism..."¹²⁰

This understanding provided the necessary impetus for him to set about forming another minority government in June and July 1866.¹²¹ Rather more slowly, it also helped Disraeli to realise that the subjects of reform and redistribution could not just be left for the next reunited Liberal government to deal with in due course.

Such a scale of constituency manipulation has not really caught the attention of previous authorities.¹²² Perhaps too much attention has been spent instead on Gladstone's words in 1866, rather than on what he actually proposed. His Liverpool speeches, the references to "kith and kin", the onward march of the social forces of the age and the historians' need and desire to rush on to 1867 have all contributed to putting the rigged gerrymandering of 1866 in the shade. The reform question of that year has been seen as a Liberal political problem as to how to address the legitimate constitutional aspirations of the upper working class. For the Conservative leaders, both of them, the question was much more of a constituency based one: how to avoid a revolution in (English) redistribution and then, having done so, how to take the political initiative and turn the tables, if possible, to the party's tactical advantage.

¹²⁰ William Foster to Disraeli, June 17th, 1866, H.P., Box 44/1, Ref. B/XI/D/75.
Foster's analysis was:

<u>Riding</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>
East	3	3
North	1	11
West	2	20
Totals	6	34

The Tory rump would have been: 2 seats for the East Riding and one each for the West Riding, South West Division, the North Riding, Beverley and Leeds. Foster did end on a slightly more positive note, giving Disraeli something to work on when the time came to try and maximise party support:

"...a majority of the higher class in Yorkshire are Conservatives and fully a half of the middle class".

¹²¹ "I spoke of Derby...as having been in former days, somewhat backward to adopt remedial measures. That remark is not applicable now". Shaftesbury to Disraeli, August 8th, 1866, H.P., Box 142/2, Ref. B/XXI/S/121.

¹²² Cowling's magnificent work refers to it on pages 67-70.

CHAPTER 5: REFORM AND REDISTRIBUTION, 1867.

Faced with the question of what to do next following the Liberal resignation, Derby and Disraeli had to consider a myriad of possibilities. In many ways the position was more difficult than in 1859. The parliamentary situation was unpromising, public opinion was semi-aroused and the Opposition would, presumably, become more radical if Derby accepted minority office for the third time. "Fusion" remained the most obvious and sensible option but it would also mean Whig dominance.¹ A Tory government by itself would portend a Reform Bill of some sort and this would trigger internal protest.² However, although irredeemable, the Tory "Cave" was not large and might be ignored.³ For the majority of the party there was a growing feeling that matters needed to be settled. Royal support encouraged this view even if it was proffered so as to hasten a speedy return to Balmoral. All manner of possible combinations and administrations were discussed but the key issue was the position of the two Tory leaders. If both stayed no combination would be likely, if one remained it would be difficult, though an appeal to the "independent" Whigs could be made.⁴ Such an offer, if accepted, could have resulted in an electoral pact, which was certainly discussed.⁵ Another favoured possibility was for Stanley to be in control of the

¹ "...the most hopeful combination would be under a Whig Premier...With a Conservative Premier we fear you could not count on the support of the Cave as a body...there w[oul]d. be little chance of further accession from the ranks of the Liberals". Elcho to Derby, June 21st, 1866, H.P., Box 26/2, Ref. B/XXI/E/126.

² The Chief Whip advised:

"I have just seen Bath at White's – and find him more of a "frondeur" than ever...he declares that he will denounce in unreserved language any attempt of Lord Derby to form a government. Bath quotes D[uke]. Of Cadogan, Knightley, D[uke]. Of Lichfield and his brother as taking his view". Taylor to Disraeli, June 27th, 1866, H.P., Box 114/1, Ref. B/XX/T/70 and 70a. Cadogan was, in fact, the 4th Earl.

³ The third most vituperative member of it wrote:

"...Derby has just written to me offering me the appointment of Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, but I have declined stating openly that I won't serve under Disraeli". Knightley to Bath, July 3rd, 1866, 4th Marquess of Bath Papers, Longleat House, Wiltshire, Ref. E/12/B/(21). By a short head Beresford Hope and Bath himself would lead the "Cave": Cranborne provided the sarcasm and intelligence, in that order.

⁴ Taylor forwarded the following advice:

"...the thing which would be most likely to make moderate Whigs join us would be a direct application from L[or]d. Derby to L[or]d. Clarendon...These moderates also fear Disraeli or Malmesbury at the Foreign Office and many would join our home policy who would fear our conduct of foreign affairs". 4th Earl of Warwick and Brooke to Taylor, Carlton Club, June 27th, 1866, H.P., Box 114/1, Ref. B/XX/T/71b.

⁵ "I agree with [Elcho] that it ought to be well understood that any Whig who stands by us against Bright will not be molested in his seat". Cranborne to Disraeli, January 2nd, 1867, H.P., Box 92/1, Ref. B/XX/Ce./2.

Commons under a titular Whig. Derby set his face against the latter, his son the former. Ties to both his father and Disraeli were too strong. Derby wrote off the Adullamites as little better than a rabble, which suited his plans but also contained much truth in it.⁶

In due course, Derby did form an entirely Conservative Cabinet, a stronger and more able body than in either 1852 or 1859 but still in a theoretical Commons' minority of 65. The Cabinet had both a clearly defined pro- and anti-Reform wing, with a middle group that disliked the issue on principle but liked office and which saw the most urgent political need as being to control the redistribution.⁷ Disraeli keenly regretted the almost immediate loss of Cairns from the new Cabinet.⁸ How to proceed was the difficulty. The main considerations were the party, the Cabinet, the Whig "Cave", the Commons and both public and electoral opinion. The options ultimately came down to eight: delay, introduce a franchise bill only, proceed with both it and a redistribution bill at the same time, set up a Royal Commission, take over the Liberal Bill and refine it, create a Boundary Commission with either wide or narrow terms of reference, dissolve the 1865 Parliament and hold a general election under the existing franchise and constituency settlement, or proceed by way of Resolutions. Derby favoured the latter, Disraeli a Royal Commission though he was, in part, convinced of the need to act, sooner rather than later, by private "Kitchen Cabinet" advice.⁹

⁶ "I have...had a long conversation with Elcho, who called to give me the state of the Adullamites, which appears to be one of complete disorganisation...we cannot look to any official support from any of them...he cannot answer even for the votes of more than...a dozen...in his view...the only mode of obtaining...strength from the mod[erate]. Lib[eral]s. would be a junction with some of their present officials; which, from their hatred & fear of Gladstone, he thinks might be effected". Derby to Disraeli, n.d., St. James's Square, H.P., Box 110/2, Ref. B/XX/S/397.

⁷ The reformers were: Derby, Disraeli, Manners, Northcote, Pakington and Stanley; the anti-reformers Carnarvon, Cranborne and Peel with Hardy holding a pivotal position between them.

⁸ Motivation was a mixture of high judicial office, money, status and hypochondria. Disraeli commented:

"I don't want to ask anything of the L[ord]. Chanc[ellor]. [Chelmsford], as I have always snubbed him, and I believe he knows that I recommended L[or]d. Derby not to reappoint him, & if Cairns had had the spirit of a louse, he w[oul]d. not have been reappointed...If Cairns had had a little heart & a little imagination, he w[oul]d. have been, by far, the first man in the House of Commons, but if he had had these qualities he w[oul]d. not have deserted L[or]d. Derby at such a crisis". Disraeli to Corry, October 17th, 1866, H.P., Box 95/1, Ref. B/XX/D/23. Cairns's ingratiating thank you letter to Disraeli is in H.P., Box 91/1, Ref. B/XX/Ca./9.

⁹ "Seven weeks visiting in Northumberland, Yorkshire, Lancashire and Lincolnshire has completely changed my notions about a Reform Bill". Spofforth to Disraeli, October 18th, 1866, H.P., Box 143/2, Ref. B/XXI/S/416.

"...I have been rather surprised at the unanimity with which all classes in the "provinces"...desire a Reform Bill – from Lord Shaftesbury to the Shropshire rustic". Corry to Disraeli, January 2nd, 1867, H.P., Box 94/1, Ref. B/XX/Co./20.

The two main themes behind the eventual Bills were a wide, but initially at least, controlled, extension of the franchise coupled with a narrow redistribution. The aim was to attract sufficient Radicals with the former bait, whilst retaining at least a proportion of Whig support from 1866 over the latter.¹⁰ The redistribution debate centred on the level of proposed disfranchisement, the new seats to be created, the broadening of existing borough boundaries in order to increase their populations and whether the size of the Commons could, and should, be increased.

However, before these issues needed to be finalised, the franchise proposals had to get through the Commons and this question predominated during the period from February – April 1867. Only after the series of votes in the latter month, which ensured that the Reform Bill would pass, however finally amended, did redistribution need to be taken rather more seriously.

Disraeli's justification over the increase in the borough franchise, in particular, was to return matters to where they had originally been before 1832. The existing £10 qualification was antipathetic to the Tories' interests and the common belief was that this was the case down to the level of £5, hence the opposition to Baines's £6 Bills in the early 1860s. Below that figure the situation became somewhat murky. Liberals believed that poor (or poorer) male householders would vote Tory due to bribery, corruption, drunkenness and ignorance. Conservatives agreed with these voting intentions but claimed that they were due to a mixture of Church and state principles, deference and patriotism.

¹⁰ Berkeley wrote:

"They talk of household suffrage coming from the Tories, or the cry to let in the educated classes; worse and worse, the educated classes are less their own masters. Thousands of clerks would be admitted, who would all go with their principles, a direct Tory measure without the Ballot". Berkeley to Parsons, November 5th, 1866, National Liberal Club Papers, op. cit., DM 1621. Berkeley's fear was of clerks voting for their bosses, or their nominated candidates.

Radicals were caught on the horns of a dilemma: if they truly subscribed to some form of borough household suffrage, they would have to accept both that it came from their opponents, not themselves, and that a grateful new town electorate might turn out to be closet Tories once enfranchised.¹¹ Whilst the Conservatives were in favour of, perhaps major, change in the boroughs, the opposite tended to be the situation in the counties, where the Chandos clause from 1832 had majority support. However, that was not tenable. A new county occupation franchise of £20 was the preferred alternative, with £15 being the lowest safe level for the party, according to its shire M.P.s.¹² No county Tory campaigned for a reduction in their separate franchise. Somewhat surprisingly, there was an absence of revolt over the amended settlement at £12. The £15 level was the original proposed limit. County loyalty was maintained for the usual reasons (dislike of Gladstone, fear of something worse, loyalty to Derby and office) and was strengthened by the prospect of malt tax repeal being dangled when financial circumstances allowed.

¹¹ Knightley commented on the trap set by Disraeli:

“So long as the Government plays into the hands of the Radicals they will support them. Gladstone and the Whigs cannot and dare not be less liberal than a Conservative!!!! Government. What are our powers of resistance? Some fifty or a hundred real Conservatives and a dozen Adullamites against the whole of the rest of the Commons. That hellish Jew has got us in his power – it is the old story of 1829 and 1846 over again. The party will be broken up”. Knightley to Bath, March 7th, 1867, 4th Marquess of Bath Papers, Longleat, Wiltshire. Quite how Knightley reached a figure of up to 100 dissentient Tory M.P.s is unclear.

¹² “...the “County Franchise”...which is to be considered at a meeting of County Members at Col[onel]. North’s...

The £20 franchise is what all Conservatives prefer but to attempt that is clearly useless now. The £10 limit would swamp us with urban voters: - to that even household suffrage would be preferable...” Richard P. Long to Disraeli, n.d., H.P., Box 47/2, Ref. B/XI/J/197.

“The Dissenting pastors, almost to a man, will vote against a Conservative candidate...£15 in the Counties is the very lowest that should be adopted. £13 would include that very large class of ignorant labourers who pay £5 a week,, and let a room or two rooms to unmarried navvies”. Unnamed correspondent to Disraeli, April 4th, 1867, H.P., Box 47/2, Ref. B/XI/J/108.

The final projected franchise increases, put forward by Disraeli at the third attempt on March 18th were:

	<u>Boroughs</u>	
1	Rated Household Franchise	250,000
2	Lateral Franchises	150,000
	Sub-total	400,000
	<u>Counties</u>	
1	£15 Rating Franchise	171,000
2	Lateral Franchises	159,000
	Sub-total	330,000
	Totals	730,000¹³

When revolt did come, it occurred within the Cabinet. On March 4th, Carnarvon, Cranborne and Peel resigned, necessitating major surgery.

The alterations were:

	Cabinet Office	New Minister	Old Minister
1	Colonial Secretary	Buckingham	Carnarvon
2	First Lord of the Admiralty	Lowry Corry	Pakington
3	India Secretary	Northcote	Cranborne
4	Lord President of the Council	Marlborough	Buckingham
5	President of the Board of Trade	Richmond	Northcote
6	War Secretary	Pakington	Peel

¹³ All figures, given to the Commons by Disraeli, were approximate. The borough household franchise included a two years' residence requirement and the personal payment of rates. There was no lodger vote included. The main additional lateral franchises were: payment of direct taxes of £1 p.a. or more, an educational vote for graduates and a deposit account of £50 minimum in either Government Funds or the National Savings Banks.

Unlike 1859, the borough freeholders would still be able to vote in the counties, except in the rare, odd case, where the city was a county in itself, such as in Bristol or Nottingham.

At the party meeting held at Derby's home in St. James's Square to outline the final franchise proposals, the only dissentient voice was Sir William Heathcote's.

These alterations made the Cabinet more loyal to Derby though intellectually weaker. It remained suitably aristocratic and administratively competent.¹⁴ The only other Cabinet upheaval came in the summer following the rioting in Hyde Park. Even though it was “mischief not malice” a tearful Walpole insisted on resigning as Home Secretary, though he remained in the Cabinet without office until February 1868. The changes were:

	<u>Cabinet Office</u>	<u>New Minister</u>	<u>Old Minister</u>
1	Home Office	Hardy	Walpole
2	Poor Law Board: Commons	Sclater Booth	Hardy
	Lords	Devon	

In order to get the Franchise Bill through the Commons, Disraeli declared that he was happy to consider some Radical amendments – though not Gladstone’s. There were three serious attempts made at derailment. They were Coleridge’s, Hibbert’s and Hodgkinson’s Amendments, all of which were theoretically about rating but were, in practice, about destroying the Tory Government and its Reform Bills. The first was nullified by the “Tea Room Revolt”, the second was surprisingly defeated 322 – 256 and the third Disraeli accepted, agreeing with its principle but clearly not fully understanding the complex details of the question.¹⁵ Four days before Coleridge’s Amendment was due to be voted on, Disraeli delivered the

¹⁴ During the life time of the third Derby Administration from June 1866 – February 1868 there were: five Earls, four commoners, three Dukes, three Lords and two members of the gentry in the Cabinet, though not all at the same time.

The March 1867 resignations were the subject of Pakington’s celebrated speech in his Droitwich Spa constituency. Majority support remained with the Government ship, which, if not sinking was certainly listing, rather than the rats. Disraeli was advised:

“The night before last I met Horsman, Milner Gibson, Ayrton & others...at Seeley’s dinner table...

Old Seeley...said, many like him, would support the Gov[ernmen]t. on the ground that it is better to have the question settled by you & L[or]d. Derby than by Beales & Potter.

They all admitted that no minister was placed in a more difficult position...than you were put into by the conduct of the three deserters in not having deserted earlier”. Sir John Pope Hennessey to Disraeli, n.d., March, 1867, H.P., Box 47/1, Ref. B/XI/J/77.

¹⁵ On Hibbert’s Amendment, Disraeli steered a middle path. Personally, he rather liked its further possible extension of the franchise but Hardy and the anti-reformers wanted to resist it in its entirety. Disraeli’s, perhaps compromised, position is mentioned in Hardy’s Diary for Saturday, April 13th, 1867. There had been an intense debate:

“...the Chancellor of the Exchequer...has had a great struggle in the Cabinet yesterday against Hardy & others...it would have been a great misfortune had Hardy & friends triumphed which would have led to the abandonment of the Bill & resignation of the Gov[ernmen]t...a dissolution of Parliament on...Hibbert’s Amendment would lead to the complete re-consolidation of the Liberal Party”. Lord Henry Gordon-Lennox to Corry, May 2nd, 1867, H.P., Box 102/3, Ref. B/XX/Lx./260. Gladstone’s earlier attempt to hijack the requirement that the newly qualified borough voters should personally pay their local rates was defeated 310 – 289.

Budget, which was rigorously free trade and financially orthodox, appealing to the Opposition backbenches and eschewing all old Protectionist demands.¹⁶ During April and May a series of changes altered the Franchise Bill, adding potentially c.500,000 additional voters. They were:

	<u>Date</u>	<u>Proposer</u>	<u>Amendment</u>	<u>Vote</u>
1	April 1st	<u>Disraeli</u>	Abandonment of dual vote	N/a
2	May 2nd	<u>Ayrton</u>	Residence requirement reduced to one year for borough householders	287-197
3	May 13th	<u>Torrens</u>	Lodgers paying rental of £10 p.a., with one year's residence, qualified	N/a ¹⁷
4	May 17th	<u>Hodgkinson</u>	Theoretical abolition of compounding by householders	N/a ¹⁸
5	End of May	<u>Dering</u>	County occupation franchise reduced from £15 - £12	N/a
6	End of May	<u>Disraeli</u>	Additional or "fancy" franchises dropped	N/a

The links with the Radicals were unholy, unofficial and pragmatic but they were consistent with previous initiatives by Disraeli. Knightley was adept at picking up what was taking place and he correctly identified the informal link:

"I met White in the lobby...and said to him: "as soon as you have got it [the Reform Bill] passed, you will begin again agitating for something more". He laughed and said: "That is exactly what I do mean to do. I have just told Bright I should support this Bill. He was very angry and said I was no better than an Adullamite and that we ought to turn the Government out upon it, but I don't care what he says I shall take what I can get from any side and a great many on our benches will do the same". Now...White, tho' a coarse rough fellow, is being truthful and straightforward...it is also possible he may have said the same to

¹⁶ At only forty-five minutes duration, it was the shortest Budget speech on record until 2005.

¹⁷ Stanley led Cabinet support for this change:

"We must carefully consider what we do about the lodger franchise, I am so deeply pledged to the principle that I cannot speak against it; but we may fix the limit where we please...I think £15 would do no harm. It would swamp only constituencies which are already as radical as they well can be..." Stanley to Disraeli, from the Foreign Office, April 23rd, 1867, H.P., Box 111/3, Ref. B/XX/S/772. Stanley was referring, in large part, to London.

¹⁸ By this time Hardy had just taken over at the Home Office, following Walpole's resignation, and he had come on board. He wrote about this famous concession:

"...you took the logical and consistent course with respect to the Reform Bill. We have never treated compounding as a check which we insisted upon but finding it so prevalent did our best to open a way out of it to those who deserved to be voters...As far as I am concerned, therefore, I approve of what you did". Hardy to Disraeli, May 18th, 1867, H.P., Box 98/3, Ref. B/XX/Ha./8.

Disraeli...I have...no doubt what he and all the Radicals will do, they will support all that is democratic and mischievous in the measure and try and throw out whatever is good".¹⁹

Disraeli avoided the mistake of not submitting the redistribution and franchise proposals together. The general principles over the former were fairly clear and well-signposted in advance. They included maintaining the majority of the small boroughs, not disfranchising totally any one constituency, using population as the determining factor as in 1832 by utilising the rather out of date 1861 Census, supplemented by the 1865-6 Electoral Returns, increasing the number of county M.P.s, providing "Justice to the North" by enfranchising a number of new, predominantly manufacturing, boroughs, and making some addition to Scotland's representation. All this might be best achieved by increasing the size of the Commons by a small amount.²⁰ He wished to retain, and to restore, the blurred distinctions between county and borough constituencies and to have seats of two, not three, M.P.s each, especially for the large cities and for the new, county divisions. The latter were to be created where the existing whole county, or sub-division, had reached a population level of 300,000, excluding the boroughs. Neither tripartite creations, along the lines of 1832, nor grouping were wanted for England. The existing county seats with three M.P.s would remain.

¹⁹ Knightley to Bath, n.d., March, 1867, 4th Marquess of Bath Papers, op. cit. Bath himself was less percipient:

"The Government I know is now entirely in Disraeli's, and if they are beaten I know a dissolution is decided on, with I suppose a radical cry for household suffrage...I believe Disraeli is in communication and acting in concert with Bright..." Bath to Knightley, March 6th, 1867, 4th Marquess of Bath Papers.

The links were no longer with Bright but with Ayrton, Clay, Osborne and Torrens:

"[Torrens's] speech...is important, in that it is very clear...that many independent Radicals, like himself, will not be dragged through the dirt, simply for the pleasure of seeing Gladstone sit on the right hand of the Speaker..." Barrington to Disraeli, April 7th, 1867, H.P., Box 88/3, Ref. B/XX/Ba./3.

Although undated, and therefore non-specific, Disraeli's MSS. include a note confirming Knightley's fears:

"MacCulloch Torrens gives me the following note of...backbenchers with you against Gladstone and his Resolutions". Colonel Taylor to Disraeli, n.d. but c. April 7th, 1867, H.P., Box 114/2, Ref. B/XX/T/86b.

²⁰ "My notion is that the House will not stand an increase of members. 665 is too near the number of the Beast to be acceptable...old Boroughs...have been retained because they are old; at least I know of no better reason. In the Cabinet of last year an increase of members had no support. It was felt that if the barrier was once broken through there would be no resisting the demands for enfranchisement". Lambert to Corry, July 9th, 1867, H.P., Box 47/2, ref. B/XI/J/167.

The very limited disfranchisement of just thirty seats, coming from the twenty-three constituencies with populations under 7,000 losing their second M.P., was agreed at the end of February.

Seven others were already available due to previous disfranchisement.²¹ The list was:

	<u>County</u>	<u>Borough Seat disfranchised</u>	<u>Number of M.P.s lost</u>
1	Buckinghamshire	Great Marlow	1
2	Cornwall, East	Bodmin	1
3	Devon, South	Honiton	1
4		Totnes*	2
5	Dorset	Dorchester	1
6	Essex, North	Harwich	1
7	Essex, South	Maldon	1
8	Gloucestershire, East	Cirencester	1
9		Tewkesbury	1
10	Hampshire, North	Andover	1
11	Hampshire, South	Lymington	1
12	Herefordshire	Leominster	1
13	Hertfordshire	Hertford	1
14	Huntingdonshire	Huntingdon	1
15	Lancashire, North	Lancaster*	2
16	Norfolk, East	Great Yarmouth*	2
17	Norfolk, West	Thetford	1
18	Shropshire, South	Ludlow	1
19	Somerset, East	Wells	1
20	Staffordshire, South	Lichfield	1
21	Surrey, East	Reigate*	1
22	Wiltshire, North	Devizes	1
23		Marlborough	1
24	Worcestershire, East	Evesham	1
25	Yorkshire, West Riding	Knaresborough	1
26		Ripon	1
27	Yorkshire, North Riding	Richmond	1
	Total		30

²¹ "...as to the seats, if we are to do anything we cannot well do less". Stanley Diary, op. cit., February 22nd, 1867. In the table, the disfranchised constituencies are indicated *.

Hardy noted that Disraeli had been up to his old tricks over the banned seats:

"We carried the disfranchisement of all 4 boroughs, but Disraeli had been intriguing & did not say a word to us at the Cabinet about it...Taylor had no doubt acted on instructions". Diary, op. cit., May 31st, 1867. The complication was over losing both Lancaster seats, see entry for North Lancashire in the North West chapter. This particular incident was more to do with Disraeli's mode of working and the day to day rush of events rather than a plot pure and simple but the prickly Hardy was no doubt within his rights to feel somewhat put upon.

Of the thirty seats to be disfranchised only five were in the North of England and one was one in the Midlands.²² The other twenty-four can best be seen as southern market, or county, towns.

This was very much a first shot and would almost inevitably be added to on its way through the Commons, an outcome which would hardly displease Disraeli and the Cabinet reformers and helps to account for the fact that the more radical options were not proceeded with. These had included partially disfranchising at population levels of 10,000 or 12,000, adding local market districts to existing boroughs in order to reach a population level of 15,000, or grouping unrepresented towns to current constituencies, a variation on Russell's plans of 1852.²³ Anything other than a straightforward population figure would be very complicated and including an 1832 style Schedule A (rather than the more acceptable Schedule B) might well not get through the Commons.²⁴

When it came to enfranchisement one set of figures was accepted by most M.P.s as being at the heart of the matter. They were the electoral statistics for 1866:

		<u>Boroughs</u>	<u>Counties</u>
1	Population	8,638,000	11,427,000
2	Inhabited houses	1,445,000	2,290,000
3	Electorate	489,000	540,000
4	Number of M.P.s	334	161 ²⁵

With only thirty seats available, Disraeli had to be careful to spread his largesse equally in order to satisfy the hopes and aspirations of his own M.P.s and their potential Radical friends.

²² They were Knaresborough, Lancaster (x2), Lichfield, Richmond and Ripon.

²³ "I send you maps of the counties of Buckinghamshire, Berkshire & Oxfordshire showing the manner in which it is possible to enlarge the small boroughs..." Baxter to Disraeli, October 20th, 1866, H.P., Box 47/1, Ref. B/XI/J/57.

"[Russell] proposed to increase 67 small boroughs by adding adjacent towns with an aggregate population of nearly 350,000. I find that his towns are [nearly]...the same...in some the new railway communications will necessitate alteration. My idea would be to district a limited number of boroughs as a counterpoise to the new boroughs & to group the remaining small boroughs with unrepresented places". Baxter to Disraeli, November 3rd, 1866, H.P., Box 47/1, Ref. B/XI/J/58a.

²⁴ "Members will not, except under the due compulsion of an Agitation such as we have not yet seen, sign their own death warrants. Don't disfranchise a single borough...Draw the line a little higher than...last session to take in places like Tavistock, Totnes etc. & simply take one member from Boroughs returning two, obtaining thereby some 30 to 40 seats..." Henry Young to Disraeli, n.d., probably early 1867, H.P., Box 47/2, Ref. B/XI/J/188.

²⁵ The statistics are for England and Wales only.

He proposed the following:

	<u>Boroughs</u>	
1	New constituencies	12
2	Division of old borough	2
	Sub-total	14
	<u>Counties</u>	
1	New constituencies	14
2	Sub-division of existing seat	1
	Sub-total	15
	<u>Other</u>	
1	University	1
	Total	30

Of the planned new borough seats, eight went to the North, three to the South and one to the Midlands. Seven had been proposed before, five were new creations. Their populations ranged from 16,762 – 41,795. There were 121 unrepresented towns of a similar population: there was no permanent figure for enfranchisement. They were:

	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Previously proposed</u>
1	Barnsley	Yorkshire, West Riding	30,318	N/a
2	Burnley	Lancashire, North	38,000	1852, 1854, 1859, 1860, 1866
3	Croydon	Surrey, East	30,240	N/a
4	Darlington	Durham, South	16,762	N/a
5	Dewsbury	Yorkshire, West Riding	38,660	1866
6	Gravesend	Kent, West	24,525	1859, 1866
7	Hartlepool	Durham, South	25,846	1859, 1866
8	Middlesbrough	Yorkshire, North Riding	24,139	1866
9	St. Helens	Lancashire, South	18,396	N/a
10	Stalybridge ²⁶	Lancashire, South	36,744	1854, 1859, 1860, 1866
11	Torquay	Devon, South	20,907	N/a
12	Wednesbury	Staffordshire, South	41,795	1859 ²⁷

The divided seat was Tower Hamlets with the northern half becoming:

1	Hackney	Middlesex	311,152
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²⁶ The majority of the proposed constituency was in Lancashire, South East, and the minority in Cheshire East (ex-North). Full details are in the North West chapter, county details for Lancashire.

²⁷ As West Bromwich.

The following counties, or county divisions, each with a population of 100, 000 excluding the represented boroughs, would be divided with each seat returning two M.P.s. They were:

1	Devon, South
2	Kent, West
3	Lancashire, North
4	Lincolnshire, North
5	Middlesex
6	Staffordshire, South
7	Surrey, East

That took matters up to twenty-eight, with the fifteenth county seat going to South Lancashire, it then being divided into:

1	South East (Salford)
2	South West (West Derby)

The final seat was to go to London University.²⁸ Disraeli’s original county proposals were surprisingly niggardly, bearing little relation to Russell’s great plan of 1854. He miscalculated and thought that this level of enfranchisement was all that his Radical “allies” would be prepared to accept. However, with only thirty seats available to be shared between county and borough, going halves was at least equitable. The counties, or county divisions, were by no means entirely agricultural and Tory and the ones which merited increased representation could be divided into three, separate categories. The metropolitan ones, such as South Essex, West Kent, Middlesex and East Surrey were being transformed by commuting, the railways, suburbanisation and wealth. The industrial ones had seen phenomenal growth since the settlement of 1832 and they were East Cheshire, North Derbyshire, South Durham, South Lancashire, South Staffordshire and the West Riding of Yorkshire. The last group were those counties which had altered in a more general and less specific way, from economic and social change. This was often a combination of factors but was likely to include one or more of the following such as the coming of the railways, greater leisure in the shape of the spa and the seaside, tourism, suburbanisation where there was urban overspill from a large town and military development.

²⁸ A Boundary Commission would be created, as part of the settlement, along the lines of 1832.

These factors were noticeable in South Devon, East Kent, North Lancashire, North Lincolnshire, East Norfolk and East Somerset.²⁹

Fortunately for Disraeli, Laing's Amendment on disfranchisement was passed at the end of May by a majority of 127. It extended the population figure for the loss of the second member from boroughs to 10,000, thus adding a further fifteen seats to the original total of thirty.³⁰

	<u>Laing's Additional Boroughs to lose 1 M.P.</u>	<u>County/County Division</u>
1	Bridgnorth	Shropshire, South
2	Bridport	Dorset
3	Buckingham	Buckinghamshire
4	Chichester	Sussex, West
5	Chippenham	Wiltshire, North
6	Cockermouth	Cumberland, West
7	Guildford	Surrey, West
8	Lewes	Sussex, East
9	Malton	Yorkshire, North Riding
10	Newport	Isle of Wight
11	Poole	Dorset
12	Stamford	Lincolnshire, South
13	Tavistock	Devon, South
14	Windsor	Berkshire
15	Wycombe	Buckinghamshire
	Total	15

In fact, Laing went further than this and originally included seven groups of mainly small boroughs, which would have taken his disfranchisement up to fifty-two seats.

²⁹ In the final settlement only South Durham, East Kent and Middlesex were not divided thus doubling their representation. However, in the case of the first and last, the separate borough creations could be said to be compensation of sorts. East Kent was very much the beggar at the feast in 1867.

³⁰ The private comments rather suggested that the Government was not too displeased by the outcome:

"...while you...were speaking against Laing's Amendment, Mr. Spofforth...was diligently whipping in favour of it...asserting that the Government wished to be beaten on the point...Lord Henry Gordon-Lennox to Disraeli, June 2nd, 1867, H.P., Box 102/3, Ref. B/XI/J/151. The diarists confirmed this view:

"...I think the House was quite right in this decision, we knew how it would go, but wished that the initiative should not be with us, lest we should alienate friends whose patience has already been tried a good deal". Stanley Diary, op. cit., May 30th, 1867.

"...Laing carried his proposal...by an enormous majority given him by our friends 72 of whom I hear voted with him. They fancied that they were procuring seats for the Counties & will I fear be grievously disappointed". Hardy Diary, op. cit., June 2nd, 1867.

They were:

	<u>County</u>	<u>Boroughs</u>
1	Cornwall	Bodmin
		Launceston
2	Devon	Ashburton
		Dartmouth
		Torquay
3	Dorset	Honiton
		Lyme Regis
4	Suffolk	Eye
		Thetford
5	Sussex	Arundel
		Chichester
6	Wiltshire	Calne
		Chippenham
7	Yorkshire	Northallerton
		Richmond

This was too close to the failed grouping scheme of 1866 for comfort. His proposed, non-binding, enfranchisement was:

	<u>Category of Seats</u>	<u>Number of new M.P.s</u>
I	3 rd M.P. to towns with populations of 150,000 or over	6
II	2 nd M.P. to towns with populations between 50,000-150,000, where there was only 1	4
III	Disraeli's proposed new boroughs	12
IV	Hackney	2
V	University of London	1
VI	Counties, or county divisions, with populations of 150,000 or over	26
VII	Pending, until final outcome of debate on seats to be disbarred for corruption	1
	Total	52³¹

The scheme was a clever package, a minor version of the Liberal plans from the previous year. It went some way to satisfy Radical intentions for the large, non-metropolitan constituencies, continued Disraeli's mini-enfranchisement of the northern, industrial seats, yet also appeared, by giving them half of the available new M.P.s to be gracious and generous to the counties. Scotland would be given its seven additional Members by increasing the size of the Commons to 665. As a

³¹ All population figures were based on the 1861 Census.

final sop, Laing dropped the grouping part of his scheme. The constituencies to benefit theoretically, therefore, were:

Category				
I	1	Birmingham	2	Bristol
	3	Leeds	4	Liverpool
	5	Manchester	6	Sheffield ³²
II	1	Birkenhead	2	Merthyr Tydfil
	3	Salford	4	Swansea
III, IV, V		As for Disraeli		
VI	1	Cheshire, North	2	Cheshire, South
	3	Cornwall, West	4	Derbyshire, North
	5	Devon, North	6	Devon, South
	7	Durham, North	8	Essex, North
	9	Essex, South	10	Kent, East
	11	Kent, West	12	Lancashire, North
	13	Lancashire, South East	14	Lancashire, South West
	15	Lincolnshire, North	16	Middlesex
	17	Norfolk, East ³³	18	Norfolk, West
	19	Somerset, East	20	Somerset, West
	21	Staffordshire, North	22	Staffordshire, South
	23	Surrey, East	24	Yorkshire, North Riding
	25	Yorkshire, West Riding, Northern Division	26	Yorkshire, West Riding, Southern Division
VII		Pending		

³² The Sheffield outrages came at just the wrong time for those who wanted increased representation for the largest towns. A correspondent wrote:

“In the small boroughs these trade unions do not exist, therefore these boroughs should not be destroyed in order to restore the balance of power and thereby preserve the liberties of England”. George Shepherd to Disraeli, Throgmorton Street, City, June 2nd, 1866, H.P., Box 47/2, Ref. B/XI/D/70.

³³ Unfortunately, in his speech on May 31st, 1867, Laing only included, or was only recorded as including, 25 of the counties or county divisions, with populations of 150,000, excluding the represented, or to be represented, boroughs. By a process of elimination the missing 26th county, or county division, was East Norfolk, whose population, excluding Norwich but including the Norfolk part of Great Yarmouth, put it comfortably above the 150, 000 threshold. The only other possibility was South Lincolnshire but its three represented boroughs of Boston Spa, Grantham and Stamford put it below the threshold. Parl. Deb., 3, vol. 187, col. 1395 (6th May – 17th June, 1867).

Before Disraeli began work on the new seats available for redistribution and whether or not to take Laing's advice as to where they should go, a second major vote was held on Gaselee's Amendment, which wanted to disfranchise entirely all boroughs with a population of fewer than 5,000.³⁴

The ten boroughs with this minute level of population, five of which had already lost one M.P. under Disraeli's original plans, were:

	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Electorate</u>
1	Arundel	Sussex, West	2,498	174
2	Ashburton	Devon, South	3,062	350
3	Dartmouth	Devon, South	4,444	282
4	Evesham (D) ³⁵	Worcestershire, East	4,680	337
5	Honiton (D)	Devon, South	3,301	267
6	Lyme Regis	Dorset	3,215	249
7	Marlborough (D)	Wiltshire, North	4,893	275
8	Northallerton	Yorkshire, North Riding	4,755	442
9	Thetford (D)	Norfolk, West	4,208	224
10	Wells (D)	Somerset, East	4,648	274
	Total		39,704	2,874

The motion to disfranchise was defeated by 269 – 217 on June 5th. Hardy regarded the small boroughs as having been “saved”, whilst Stanley had actually advocated in Cabinet their complete disfranchisement.³⁶ On June 13th Disraeli returned with his new redistribution scheme, taking into account Laing's Amendment.

³⁴ Disraeli was warned:

“Be prepared for a serious attempt to defeat the Gov[ernmen]t. tomorrow on Gaselee's motion. The Opposition as a body support[s] him, besides which Newdegate & some County members are likely to vote against the Gov[ernmen]t.” J.Bateman to Corry, June 2nd, 1867, H.P., Box 47/2, Ref. B/XI/J/151.

³⁵ (D) indicates inclusion on Disraeli's original list.

³⁶ He wrote:

“(In the end it was decided to oppose the amendment, as likely to be unpopular in the House, and to create opposition to the farther progress of the bill: I opposed this decision, but the House has since taken the same view)”. Stanley Diary, op. cit., June 5th, 1867.

The details were:

	<u>Type of Seat</u>	<u>County (where applicable)</u>	<u>Number of M.P.s</u>	<u>New or Old Proposal</u>
	<u>London Boroughs</u>			
1	Chelsea	Middlesex	2	N
2	Hackney	Middlesex	2	O
	<i>Sub-total</i>		4	
	<u>New Boroughs</u>			
1	Barnsley	Yorkshire, West Riding, Southern Division	1	O
2	Burnley	Lancashire, North East	1	O
3	Dewsbury	Yorkshire, West Riding, Southern Division	1	O
4	Darlington	Durham, South	1	O
5	Gravesend	Kent, Mid (ex-West)	1	O
6	Hartlepool	Durham, South	1	O
7	Keighley	Yorkshire, West Riding, Northern Division	1	N
8	Luton	Bedfordshire	1	N
9	Middlesbrough	Yorkshire, North Riding	1	O
10	St. Helens	Lancashire, South West	1	O
11	Stalybridge	Lancashire, South East	1	O
12	Stockton	Durham, South	1	N
13	Wednesbury	Staffordshire, East (ex-South)	1	O
	<i>Sub-total</i>		13	
	<u>Additional Seats to Existing Boroughs</u>			
1	Merthyr Tydfil	Glamorganshire	1	N
2	Salford	Lancashire, South East	1	N
	<i>Sub-total</i>		2	
	<u>University Seat</u>			
1	Durham & London		1	N
	<i>Sub-total</i>		1	
	<u>Counties to be divided</u>			
1	Cheshire		2	N
2	Derbyshire		2	N
3	Devon		2	O
4	Essex		2	N
5	Lincolnshire		2	O
6	Norfolk		2	N
7	Somerset		2	N
8	Staffordshire		2	O
9	Yorkshire, West Riding		2	N
	<i>Sub-total</i>		18	

	<u>County Divisions to be sub-divided</u>			
1	Kent, West		2	O
2	Lancashire, North		2	O
3	Surrey, East		2	O
	<i>Sub-total</i>		6	
	<u>Existing County Division to receive an extra M.P. and to be sub-divided</u>			
1	Lancashire, South		1	O
	<i>Sub-total</i>		1	
	Total		45	25 Old, 20 New

Given that the increase in the number of available seats was only from 30 – 45, Disraeli's re-modelling was impressively extensive. The boroughs gained five seats on the original plans and the counties ten. The former saw a second, new, double member constituency for London (Chelsea), two net additional M.P.s as part of the "Justice to the North" campaign (Keighley, Luton and Stockton replacing Croydon and Torquay) and an extra seat for Salford, with the last addition going to Wales. The largesse to the northern and metropolitan boroughs was an obvious attempt to buy off Radical opposition to the failure of not increasing the representation at all, outside London, for the big cities. The latter alterations were somewhat subtler and more in the Conservatives' interest. The original plans for West Kent, North Lancashire and East Surrey remained the same. However, the alterations to the eight other counties, and one county division, meant that they, too, were to be divided entirely into three, new, separate divisions, with each one having two M.P.s. They were the remaining original three of Devon, Lincolnshire and Staffordshire and the six new ones of Cheshire, Derbyshire, Essex, Norfolk, Somerset and the West Riding of Yorkshire. The one county which missed out was Middlesex, which was effectively replaced by Chelsea.

Disraeli claimed that his new scheme would mean that there were 237 county seats, comprising the counties themselves and their associated rural and small towns, and 258 borough seats in England and Wales. There were still obvious weaknesses in his resubmitted proposals. There was no increased representation for the biggest cities, no specific scheme for Scotland beyond a vague preference

to increase the size of the Commons and there were still obvious county divisions that required additional representation, via sub-division, such as East Kent, West Gloucestershire and possibly, North Warwickshire, which was dependent on the outcome of the question of the Birmingham boundaries.

Laing immediately proposed a third M.P. for the six English boroughs with populations over 150,000. They were:

1	<u>Birmingham</u>	296,076	4	<u>Liverpool</u>	443,938
2	<u>Bristol</u>	154,093	5	<u>Manchester</u>	357,979
3	<u>Leeds</u>	207,165	6	<u>Sheffield</u>	185,172 ³⁷

If the vote passed, the two non-English large boroughs of Dublin and Edinburgh would also require inclusion in amended Irish and Scottish Bills. Glasgow was already included in the latter. Laing proposed that the additional seats would come from a variation on his theme of grouping the smaller boroughs once again. He planned to take Gaselee’s ten plus Harwich and Richmond, which were both near the 5,000 population level.³⁸ These twelve seats would be grouped and the six thus released would go to the large cities. The Government just won by 247 – 239 but the closeness of the result and the size of the division rather suggested that this might well not be the end of the question.

It then lost two further votes. The first was over the odd grouping of Durham and London Universities which was defeated by 234 – 226 on June 18th.³⁹ The second loss was on voting papers which went down by 272 – 234 on June 20th.

On July 1st, Horsfall, Graves’s Tory colleague from Liverpool, pared Laing’s proposal down and put forward an amendment to give an additional member to the three large boroughs with populations over 250,000.⁴⁰ Horsfall pointed out that in England, including London, 4,250,000 people lived in towns with populations of 150,000 or more. This made up 44% of the total borough population, yet it elected only 34 out of the 322 English town M.P.s, which was

³⁷ The figures are from 1861.
³⁸ Harwich: 1861 population 5,070; Richmond 5,134.
³⁹ Stanley wrote:
 “...Debate on London and Durham universities, to which the cabinet (very foolishly, as I think) decided to give a member jointly: the two places having nothing whatever to do with one another: naturally the House objected, and several divisions were taken: in the last of which we were beaten, as we deserved to be: and so the matter will drop”. *Diary, op. cit.*, June 18th, 1867.
⁴⁰ It beggars belief to think that this was not done without at least Disraeli’s tacit support, though no written note has been found to confirm this.

approximately 11%. Baines then added Leeds to the list and during the debate the local M.P.s also added Bristol, Sheffield and Swansea.

On behalf of the Government, Adderley initially opposed the Amendment but Disraeli then performed a somersault and accepted the clause for Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester.⁴¹ Where the seats were to come from was not made entirely clear but Disraeli gave the impression that the second proposed M.P.s for Merthyr Tydfil and Salford, plus two of the planned new boroughs, would have to make way. Whilst wholly politically sensible and electorally justifiable, acceptance of the principle of granting additional M.P.s largely on the grounds of population only was almost new in 1867. Disraeli explained such a volte face by saying that opinion in the Commons had changed and that the Government was responding to the altered circumstances.⁴² It was important for Disraeli to reward northern Toryism, its capitals and its leaders, and if the price to be paid for supporting the party's prospects in Leeds and Liverpool was greater representation for the radical bastions of Birmingham and Manchester then so be it.⁴³ At this stage, as there was no cumulative vote, the outcome would be difficult to predict but Horsfall's and Cairns's Amendments need to be taken together.

In order to prevent matters from getting out of hand, with much still to be done, the weather hot, M.P.s increasingly fractious and the Thames unpleasant, Disraeli refused to accept a third M.P. for either Sheffield or Bristol and he threatened a dissolution, whether seriously is unclear, if either passed.⁴⁴ His bluff was not called as both were defeated: Sheffield by 258 – 122 and Bristol by 235 – 136. Swansea, which was also tabled at the last minute, was not put to the vote.

⁴¹ Hardy was not greatly impressed and he hinted (again) at a possible resignation but those days were past:

"Our course about the large Boroughs is to my mind unsatisfactory & again & again I long to be out of the bother...the House sneered at Disraeli's surrender. Odious work". Diary, op. cit., July 2nd, 1867.

⁴² It was this episode which led to General Peel's famous and inaccurate comment about the events of 1867 when he said:

"There are three things which I have...learnt...the first is, that nothing has so slight a vitality as a "vital point"; the second that there is nothing so insecure as "securities"; and the third that there is nothing so elastic as the conscience of a Cabinet Minister". *Parl. Deb.*, 3, vol. 188, c. 839 (18th June – 23rd July, 1867).

⁴³ In the 1865 Parliament, out of eight seats for the four great cities, the Tories had three M.P.s, two for Liverpool and one for Leeds. This may be compared with the situation in the small Devon boroughs.

⁴⁴ The Bristol situation was complex involving both the boundaries and the almost unique situation over the freeholders but the advice from the local party was that a third member was not wanted without the cumulative vote. No Tory was elected for Sheffield after 1832 until 1880.

On July 4th, Disraeli announced that, contrary to previous implications, the four seats for the large cities would now come from all four of the scheduled new boroughs, namely Barnsley, Keighley, Luton and St. Helens. Colonel Gilpin, Tory M.P. for Bedfordshire, then moved an amendment to restore the four, lost, new seats by taking away the second M.P. from those four seats next in line above the 10,000 population level. They were:

	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Population</u>		<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Population</u>
1	Barnstaple	10,743	3	Tiverton	10,447
2	Warwick	10,570	4	Tamworth	10,192

The motion was lost by 224 – 195.

The last of the major amendments and debates in the Commons took place on the cumulative vote. Morrison moved to have only two votes in a three member seat, with three votes in the City of London for four M.P.s and Lowe tabled a similar motion to have restricted voting in twelve constituencies. They were defeated 314 – 173 with both Disraeli and Gladstone voting in the majority.⁴⁵

The Reform Bill then quickly completed its passage through the Commons clearing the Report Stage on July 12th and the Third reading three days later. There were nasty anti – Disraeli speeches by both Cranborne and Lowe and Beresford Hope was particularly critical of the redistribution schedules, regarding them as temporary and impermanent. There was no division on the Third Reading: Gladstone realising that the Bill could not be defeated at such a late stage.

Opposition in the Lords was led by Grey and Halifax. Grey proposed a blocking Resolution and tried to gain the support of dissident Tory peers.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ W. Morrison, Liberal M.P., Plymouth, 1861-74.

Stanley wrote:

“...Good debate on cumulative vote...I have always thought the plan of cumulative voting sound and just in principle, if applied in a country where electoral divisions were equal, in such manner that every constituency should have three members. But this cannot be the case with us: and in England the diversities actually existing in representation supply, though in a rougher and less perfect manner, the securities desired for the minority”. *Diary*, op. cit., July 5th, 1867.

⁴⁶ “...[Grey] has been tampering, and with the aid of Carnarvon, not unsuccessfully, with our people...” Derby to Disraeli, July 18th, 1867, H.P., Box 110/3, Ref. B/XI/S/438.

Stanley confirmed that this was to be the main attempt at halting the Bill's progress in the Lords.⁴⁷ Derby then effectively made the matter into a vote of confidence. He called a meeting of Tory peers to St. James's Square and asked for their support.⁴⁸ When it was held only six Lords spoke, namely Carnarvon, Denman, Derby himself, Hardwicke, Rutland and Redesdale. Denman, Hardwicke and Redesdale put their loyalty to the Prime Minister above their reservations over the Bill. Carnarvon, not surprisingly, and Rutland reserved the right to amend and would listen to Grey accordingly. Only Lord Selkirk was noted as applauding Carnarvon's caustic grumblings.

The situation became fraught because Derby suffered from a severe attack of gout at this point. Malmesbury was much less able to appeal to party sentiment and personal loyalty but fortunately for the Government Grey ran out of steam and the blocking manoeuvre failed.⁴⁹

There then followed a whole series of amendments, thirteen major ones all told, by both Grey and Halifax, which attacked the whole proposed redistribution. Halifax' resolution was, again, taken as a no confidence resolution. Although he was thoroughly imprecise over detail, Halifax reiterated the case for the ten smallest boroughs by population to be wholly disfranchised, with the seats released going to the larger counties. He proposed a third M.P. for undivided counties and county divisions with population levels of 200,000 (the same as for the large boroughs) and 150,000 respectively.

⁴⁷ "...Much talk about a coalition between the Whig opposition in the Lords, and the malcontent Conservatives, to support some amendment to the reform bill, which, as they calculate, will compel the ministry either to resign or withdraw the bill. Grey, Carnarvon, Cranborne, Lowe, are actively engaged in this project, and they appear to have secured the support of the Times". Diary, op. cit., July 19th, 1867.

⁴⁸ "L[or]d. D[erby]. asked young Lords to speak...Grey's Amend[ment]. infinitely more damaging than open declaration of hostility - because it does the same thing...as a rejection on the 3rd reading would have done..."

Considers adoption of this Resolution as a rejection of the Bill".

Disraeli's notes on a meeting of Conservative peers at St. James's Square, July 19th, 1867, H.P., Box 47/3, Ref. B/XI/J/217. His account was supplemented by Corry's more detailed, original, pencil notes. They were both copied by Arthur E. Scanes? On August 1st, 1884; see H.P., Box 46/2, Ref. B/XI/H/2c.

⁴⁹ "...Grey appears to have collapsed - & if it were anyone else, I would say he would not divide". Derby to Disraeli, July 22nd, 1867, H.P., Box 110/3, Ref. B/XI/S/440.

This would have covered:

1	Yorkshire, West Riding x3	6	Derbyshire, South
2	Lancashire, South x2	7	Durham, North
3	Cheshire, South	8	Kent, East
4	Cornwall, West	9	Middlesex
5	Derbyshire, North		

Tory opposition was due to the method proposed of increasing county representation, the late hour of introducing such major changes which would unbalance the whole settlement and, perhaps most importantly, the fact that these were not overwhelmingly Conservative counties or divisions.

Halifax also mocked the borough arrangements which did look rather odd. Of the original twelve ones to be enfranchised, two, namely Croydon and Torquay, had been dropped. Then three new ones, Keighley, Luton and Stockton were introduced only for Barnsley, Keighley, Luton and St. Helens to make way for the four additional seats to the largest towns. Halifax argued that this rather cavalier approach highlighted the great disparities in population of where was to be included and where excluded:

	<u>Borough</u>	<u>Population</u>
<u>Retained</u>		
1	Darlington	16,000
2	Stockton	17,000
<u>Omitted</u>		
1	St. Helens	41,000
2	Keighley	34,000
3	Barnsley	30,000
4	Luton	22,000
5	Rotherham	20,000
6	Glossop	19,000
7	Leamington Spa	17,000
8	Doncaster	16,000

The resolution was defeated 100 – 59.

Grey's amendment on redistribution was to move the loss of one seat from double member boroughs up to 12,000, thus creating twelve more for enfranchisement and to group a number of the smaller boroughs adding an additional eleven. He submitted details of where the twenty-three seats so obtained would go but failed to include the grouping details. As they were on top of Disraeli's forty-five, the

final total of sixty-eight was very similar to Russell's plan of 1854. the extra M.P.s would go to undivided constituencies, making them three cornered and they would be elected on the cumulative vote principle. The population level was set at 150,000. The seats were:

	<u>Counties</u>
1	Yorkshire, West Riding x3
2	Lancashire, North x2
3	Lancashire, South x2
4	Cornwall, West
5	Durham, North
6	Kent, East
7	Middlesex
8	Yorkshire, North Riding
	<u>Boroughs</u>
1	Bristol
2	Finsbury
3	Lambeth
4	Marylebone
5	Sheffield
6	Southwark
7	Westminster
8	Wolverhampton
	<u>Other</u>
1	Inns of Court x3

As a third of the county seats would go to Yorkshire and five out of the eight additional urban members to London, the plan might well have gained major support in the Commons and would obviously have seriously harmed the Tories electorally, which was the whole purpose in tabling it.⁵⁰ It was only just defeated by 98 – 86. As grouping contributed to its defeat, Lyveden made a further attempt to alter the redistribution schedules, without grouping, by proposing to disfranchise the boroughs with populations of 5,000 or less, which was a repeat of Gaselee's motion. It went down 93 – 37.

Only five of the Lords' Amendments passed: Harrowby's to raise the copyhold franchise from £5 - £10, Salisbury's to allow for voting papers and Cairns's trilogy of changes.

⁵⁰ Derby exploded:

"...a plan so extraordinary, so immature, so crude and so absolutely incomplete...[an] indigested, ill-concocted scheme...what at present is nonsense". *Parl. Deb.*, 3, vol. 189, cols. 539-44, 924th July – 21st August, 1867).

They were:

	<u>Details</u>	<u>Lords' voting</u>
1	To admit lodgers in sets of chambers, colleges and halls	124 - 76
2	To raise the general lodger franchise from £10 - £15	121 - 89
3	To allow for minority voting	142 - 51 ⁵¹

At the Report Stage the Lords dropped the attempt to raise the general lodger franchise. The main issue was minority voting and Cairns had written earlier in the year explaining why he favoured its introduction:

“As to the place of voting for 2 in 3 corn[ere]d. constituencies, it w[oul]d. lose 2 seats possibly, in those we now have; but I think it might be made available by creating more constit[uencie]s. of that kind, to secure from 15 – 20 seats for the representation of the great minorities in such places as Manchester, Leeds, Glasgow & the democratic counties: & if once introduced any attempt hereafter to undo it w[oul]d. be a measure of disfranchisement & might be resisted accordingly. It is not the most logical or best, but I believe it to be the most feasible mode of securing, under a wide extension of suffrage in large towns & populous counties, a representation for property and intelligence”.⁵²

The Bill passed its Third Reading in the Lords on August 6th and returned to the Commons on the 8th. Its decisions on the proposed amendments were:

	<u>Proposer</u>	<u>Details of Amendment</u>	<u>Result</u>
1	Bright	Rejection of minority vote clause	Lost 253 – 204
2	Colvile	Restoration of copyhold and leasehold qualification at £5	Won 235 – 188
3	Disraeli	Voting papers (counties only)	Lost 258 – 206
4	Palmer	Students in hall at Oxford and Cambridge not to vote in their town constituency	Won 188 - 164

⁵¹ Two votes only to be allowed in three - cornered constituencies and three votes for the four seats in the City of London. Twelve constituencies were affected in England and Wales: the City of London, the counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Dorset, Herefordshire, Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire and the large boroughs of Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester. Glasgow was also included in the Scottish Reform Bill. South Lancashire had been a three member seat from 1861-7 but the proposed addition of its fourth M.P. and sub-division meant that it was not affected. The overall effect of the clause is covered in Hanham, op. cit., Appendix II B, p. 398.

⁵² Cairns to Disraeli, March 4th, 1867, H.P., Box 91/1, Ref. B/XX/Ca./10.

Harrowby made one last attempt to add to the representation of minorities when, on August 5th, he proposed an amendment to get rid of Chelsea as a new constituency and to add a third M.P. instead to both Marylebone and Westminster on minority voting principles. Westminster's boundaries would have been extended to take in Chelsea, Fulham, Hammersmith and Kensington. Derby opposed it and it did not pass.

Only minority voting, therefore, was accepted by the Commons. The only issue on which the Lords insisted on sending their reasons, in writing, for requiring amendment to the Act to the Commons was over voting papers. No further votes were taken. The parliament ended on August 21st. The final, proposed, redistribution settlement was:

	Boroughs	County	Number of new M.P.s
I	New		
1	Chelsea	Middlesex	2
2	Burnley	Lancashire, North	1
3	Darlington	Durham, South	1
4	Dewsbury	Yorkshire, West Riding	1
5	Gravesend	Kent, West	1
6	Hartlepool	Durham, South	1
7	Middlesbrough	Yorkshire, North Riding	1
8	Stalybridge	Lancashire, South	1
9	Stockton	Durham, South	1
10	Wednesbury	Staffordshire, South	1
	<i>Sub-total</i>		11
II	Division of Old		
1	Hackney	Middlesex	2
	<i>Sub-total</i>		2
III	Addition to Old (1 – 2)		
1	Merthyr Tydfil	Glamorganshire	1
2	Salford	Lancashire, South	1
	<i>Sub-total</i>		2
IV	Addition to Old (2 – 3)		
1	Birmingham	Warwickshire, North	1
2	Leeds	Yorkshire, West Riding, Eastern Division	1
3	Liverpool	Lancashire, South West	1
4	Manchester	Lancashire, South East	1
	<i>Sub-total</i>		4
	<i>Borough sub-total</i>		19
V	New County Divisions		
1	Cheshire, Mid		2
2	Derbyshire, East		2
3	Devon, East		2
4	Essex, East		2
5	Kent, Mid		2
6	Lancashire, North East		2
7	Lincolnshire, Mid		2
8	Norfolk, South (or North)		2
9	Somerset, Mid		2
10	Staffordshire, East		2

11	Surrey, Mid		2
12	Yorkshire, West Riding, Eastern Division		2
	Sub-total		24
VI	Division of Old		
1	South Lancashire		1
	<i>Sub-total</i>		1
	<i>County sub-total</i>		25
VII	Universities		
1	London		1
	<i>University sub-total</i>		1
	Total		45

The settlement was temporary and matters consequently moved to the Boundary Commission. Politically, Disraeli had achieved his triumph: now the electoral and psephological detail had to support it.⁵³

⁵³ Disraeli's journalist friend wrote:

"The stubborn old squires & country baronets who always opposed me on the point of your leadership, have come round now & swear by you as much as they hesitated to swear at all before. What a curious thing is reputation". F.W.Haydon to Disraeli, August 31st, 1867, H.P., Box 131/2, Ref. B/XXI/H/395.

CHAPTER 6: THE BOUNDARY COMMISSION AND THE SELECT COMMITTEE, 1867 – 8.

A Boundary Commission, as part of a general Reform settlement, was very much part of Tory thinking as early as autumn 1866. Disraeli had, in a rather vague way, hoped that the creation of a Commission, perhaps with a restricted remit to look into the boundaries of the northern boroughs only, might have bought time, or at least a year in which to enjoy office. However, it was soon clear that this would not hold the attention of the Commons and so Derby began the process of considering both membership and terms of reference. Over the former, he wrote:

“I do not object to Ld. Grey...He is crotchety & will make himself v[ery]. disagreeable, but his views are in the main Conservative...your 3 Lib[eral]. Members alarm me. I do not know enough of Laing’s opinions...Mill may be in favour of plurality & Ayrton may “hate the mob”...they rep[resent]. 2 Rad[ical]. constit[utent]s. & have avowed the most extreme principles...you will want some strong men on our side to counter...these I do not think you have got. Ld. Devon...is v[ery]. weak...I would far rather...Hylton who is liberally inclined...Baxter would be invaluable...I do not think Walsh would be a good selection...old Henley?”¹

Discussion then switched to other matters and the composition of the Commission did not come up again until mid – April, 1867 when it appeared likely that a Conservative Reform Bill would get through the Commons.

¹ Over the terms of reference, he wrote:

“...the scheme [the instructions for the Commission] makes no allusion to any increase in the population of the very smallish Boroughs, & this will be a reasonable ground of objection on the “Lib.” Side, that Arundel...& Calne...& others, will retain undiminished influence...your last paragraph should read...

“To revise the Boundaries...so that all Boroughs...returning a member...should include a pop[ulation]. of no less than (7,000).”

...you have gone too far in enquiring into...boundaries...of all Boroughs above 10,000 pop[ulation]. This...will include not less than 41 Boroughs – which is more than we shall be able to provide for by disfranchisement. If you take 12,000 you will reduce the no. of claims to 32”. Derby to Disraeli, December 22nd, 1866, H.P., Box 110/2, Ref. B/XX/S/380.

Biographical details are provided in the relevant county entries in the appropriate geographical and regional chapters.

Again, Derby made the running, partly because the chairman was, of necessity, likely to be a member of the Lords and also Disraeli neither knew the personnel well enough, nor had sufficient social standing to cajole and persuade.² He approached the matter from a slightly different, and perhaps narrower perspective, believing that such political plums were not above party and should not, as a general rule, be reserved for non - political hands. Nevertheless, Derby, too, realised the political importance of the appointments to the Commission and was fertile in his list of suggestions. He wrote:

“Ld. North was here today and is very anxious to remind us of the great importance attached to the selection of the Boundary Commission as they will have the power of nominating the assistant Commissioners.

He thinks we ought to have a majority of the Commissioners on the Conservative side, so as to secure the nomination of Assistant Commissioners to whom our M.P.s can go in confidence without the medium of any election agent.

Ld. Malmesbury is desirous that Sir H.D.Wolff should be another.

Suggested names:

	<u>Commissioners</u>	<u>Assistant Commissioners</u>
1	Hon. A. Liddell	T.J.Barstow
2	R.A.Pickering	R.A.Benson
3	E.P.Price	H.Longley
4	A. Staveley Hill	H.C.Raikes
5		Hon. E. Stanhope
6		Hon. F. Thesiger
7		Sir H.D. Wolff
8		Hon. F.S. Wortley” ³

The assumption was that the Assistant Commissioners would undertake the spade work and make the detailed, constituency recommendations, whilst the social prestige attached to being a full Commissioner made them most coveted posts, opening the

² Derby advised:

“Have you considered at all the composition of our Boundary Commission? It has occurred to me that if we could have some man of authority at the head of it, they might leave the details to subordinates; and that we should do well if we could engage the services of Lord Eversley, (or Ld. Grey), Ld. Redesdale, the Speaker, and 2 non - political men of eminence...whether you have any names to propose for the 2 additional members. They might perhaps be left to the other three to select, subject to the approval of Parl[iamen]t. I name this now, because the question may be upon us sooner than we expect”. Derby to Disraeli, April 16th, 1867, H.P., Box 110/3, Ref. B/XX/S/428.

³ Derby to Disraeli, undated, H.P., Box 45/3, Ref. B/XI/G/34a.

door to future diplomatic and legal promotion and political patronage, especially if the Commission's conclusions and recommendations were to the Tories' advantage.⁴

In mid - May, 1867, the ex - Speaker of the Commons, Eversley, accepted the lead role.⁵ He then considered how best the Commission could be constructed in order to pass muster in the Commons.⁶ Apart from the necessity for some sort of political balance which would be acceptable to the Commons, there was also the need for regional representation. Northcote advised:

"One criticism will...be made...It is too southern. As one of the main functions will be to extend the boundaries of manufacturing towns ought there not to be someone who is more nearly connected with the North?...Among moderate Liberals there are the two Beaumonts (Wentworth and Somerset), Akroyd, Hibbert, Cobbett(?).

I cannot think of a good northern Conservative.

There is Elcho, who might perhaps do. Walpole was afraid that if we take Russell Gurney without a member from the opposite side to balance him we should get into trouble. He suggested Laing, but I don't much like him".⁷

Disraeli tried his best to balance the competing needs of gaining Commons' approval with the necessity of satisfying his party.

⁴ "Will you help me to be appointed one of the "Boundary Commissioners" under the new Reform Bill? Don't you think that my services to our party deserve some little recognition? Besides, as a "Lancashire Man" perhaps I ought to be in the Commission". Robert Fowler, Q.C., to Richard Garth, June 14th, 1867, H.P., Box 45/3, Ref. B/XI/G/12b.

Garth then endorsed and forwarded the letter:

"I have put the enclosed today from Fowler, the Q.C. of Manchester, an out - and - out Conservative - but an English diamond.

He is our first "party" man in the North - but I should fear too much of a party man for the place he seeks". Richard Garth to Hunt?, June 15th, 1867, H.P., Box 45/3, Ref. B/XI/G/12a.

⁵ "...you will be glad to hear that Eversley accepts the Presidency of our B.C., and the Speaker has satisfied him that his Peerage is no objection...I think 5 will be the best number, (including himself); 3 the minimum and 7 the maximum". Derby to Disraeli, May 16th, 1867, H.P., Box 110/3, Ref. B/XX/S/431.

⁶ "Ld. Derby begs me to write...to tell you that Ld. Eversley thinks it indispensable that there should be two M.P.s (one of each side) attached to the B.C. He says that if this is the case their Report will be at once accepted by the H. of C. - and that it would not be so otherwise. He writes me, therefore, to defer the announcement of the names of the Commission as we have not got a Liberal M.P. in our Bill". Malmesbury to Disraeli, June 13th, 1867, H.P., Box 99/2, Ref. B/XX/Hs./135.

⁷ Northcote to Disraeli, June 14th, 1867, H.P., Box 107/1, Ref. B/XX/N/5. Lambert commented on this letter:

"Strange that...Northcote should contemplate the appointment of a third Liberal". Note from "J.L.", *ibid*.

This was to be achieved by appointing a third Liberal to the Commission but one who was not, at that time, a M.P.⁸

On June 18th, Disraeli announced the proposed names of the seven Commissioners, who were:

1	E.P.Bouverie	(Lib.)	5	R.Gurney	(Con.)
2	T.W.Bramston	(Con.)	6	Lord Penrhyn	(Con.)
3	Sir John Duckworth	(Con.)	7	J. Walter (jun.)	(Lib.)
4	Viscount Eversley	(Lib.)			

Bright led criticism in the House, referring to “the Gentlemen Commissioners” and saying of Walter that “he had a fanatical admiration of...the territorial interest”.⁹ Bright’s other, stated, concern, apart from the over - representation of the landed interest, was that the real work would be undertaken by the Assistant Commissioners and over them the Commons had no control. His real reason for being objectionable was that he wanted a pliant Commission that would not look too closely into the Birmingham boundaries, would leave the suburb of Aston where it was and so continue to make North Warwickshire highly marginal. However, Disraeli needed to retain independent Radical support at such a crucial period and so out went Bouverie, Bramston and Penrhyn to be replaced by Sir Francis Crossley. This shifted the party balance nominally to three to two in favour of the Liberals but Walter was biddable, especially over minority representation and Eversley was unlikely to be too extreme. The reconstituted body was now:

1	Sir Francis Crossley	(Lib.)
2	Sir John Duckworth	(Con.)
3	Viscount Eversley	(Lib.)
4	R. Gurney	(Con.)
5	J.Walter (jun.)	(Lib.)

⁸ “I have just received a letter...that Lord Eversley objects to preside over the B.C. unless his Liberal colleague is a member of the House of Commons. That Liberal colleague is...yourself.

I have proposed...that they [the Cabinet] should permit 3 Liberal members to sit upon the Commission...But they have expressed to me their conviction that the arrangement would be misconceived in the country and lead to great heart - burnings, misapprehensions and bad feeling”. Disraeli to John Walter (jun.), June 17th, 1867, H.P., Box 59/1, Ref. B/XIII/W/49.

⁹ *Parl. Deb.*, 3, vol. 188, cols 271 - 4, (18th June - 23rd July, 1867). One of Disraeli’s nominees wrote:

“I see by “*The Globe*” this morning that Mr. Bright...raised objections last night to the names offered for the B.C. [He] says that the duties of the office would interfere with the performance of my private duties - and to which they would probably be sacrificed...there is another...objection...the other members named are interested in the representation of the Counties, by having been, or by wishing again to be, members for those Counties...it may be brought as an objection against me that my son is a member for a County”. Lord Penrhyn to Taylor, June 22nd, 1867, H.P., Box 47/2, Ref. B/XI/J/163.

Crossley's appointment, in particular, was severely criticised from a party stand point.¹⁰

Once the membership was finally settled, the terms of reference had to be agreed. Disraeli minuted the Cabinet instructions at the end of May and then Lambert investigated the precedents and provided the necessary details from 1831 - 2 in June.¹¹ The main difference was over the treatment of the new and old constituencies. The temporary boundaries of the new borough and county divisions, as established by the 1867 Act, could be altered either way by addition or subtraction. However, the limits of the existing borough constituencies could only be enlarged, as contraction of existing boundaries would lead to the disfranchisement of both existing and future voters. Disraeli noted:

"In cases where the Commissioners find urban population grown up in any part of a parish external to a Borough, part of which parish is within the Borough, they may recommend the addition of such external portion of the parish to the Borough".¹²

This was the formal way of saying that radical, urban voters had to be got out of the counties, so that nationally the Conservatives might have a chance of winning elections once more.

The instructions for the boroughs were rather more detailed than for the counties. The Commissioners were able to use their discretion as to what areas might be incorporated into existing boroughs. This could include bringing in outlying parts of an already half included parish, referring to local Board of Health districts and utilising both natural, and man made, geographical features, such as rivers and railways. Boundaries were to be continuous, though there were one or two exceptions to this for purely local reasons, so that grouped boroughs could not be created.

¹⁰ "We are smashed and may shut up political shop as soon as we like in Yorkshire, of all the D---d mistakes ever made in this world was D'I....li's to put Ld. Halifax's right hand man, Sir F. Crossley, on as Boundary Commissioner, and what vexes me is that I went over Ld. Halifax's lines of divisions with Dudley Baxter and told him and he quite agreed that such divisions must return all of Lord Halifax's men – there is not a particle of doubt that these divisions will be drawn out by [the] Duke]. Of Devonshire, Lord Halifax and Sir F. Crossley & Co. Well thank God this is no doing of mine but mark my earnest words it is all over with us...Private – except to friends, that is if we have any friends". Montagu?, Melton Park, Doncaster to "My dear Edward [Stanley], June 27th, 1867, H.P., Box 45/3. For a full analysis, see the entry for Yorkshire, West Riding in the chapter on "The North".

¹¹ Lambert's notes, June 24th, 1867, H.P., Box 45/3, Ref. B/XI/G/33.

¹² Disraeli's Cabinet minutes, May 25th, 1867, H.P., Box 45/3, Ref. B/XI/G/35c. The Commission's instructions are largely incorporated in Clause 48 of the 1867 Representation of the People Act.

As far as the counties were concerned, a less specific approach was taken. The Commission was to take note of the nature and character of both the existing, and proposed, divisions and the places for holding the county elections. The 1867 Act intended to equalise both the populations and size of the respective county divisions. The hundred boundaries were the essential guide but where these were impractical, due to their scattered nature, petty sessional divisions were a practical alternative. For both county and borough, statistics were taken from the 1866-7 Electoral returns with the county populations being exclusive of the represented, or to be represented, boroughs. The Commission's local inquiries were public, with not less than seven days' notice given and were advertised in the local press. Two Assistant Commissioners investigated each area, one an army officer who oversaw the production of the local maps, the other a barrister. The maps, taken from the Ordnance Survey, contained four colour coded boundaries as follows:

1	Existing 1832, or proposed 1867, boundary	Blue
2	Municipal boundary (where applicable)	Green
3	Parish and township boundaries	Yellow
4	Proposed 1868 extension (where applicable)	Red

The Commission seemed to work reasonably harmoniously without too many divisions of opinion with each commissioner overseeing the work of particular areas, though Crossley rather lived up to his reputation.¹³ The aim was that the Commission's report would be in by Christmas, 1867.¹⁴ However, matters were delayed and the Report did not finally reach Hardy, as Home Secretary, until February 5th, 1868.¹⁵

¹³ Disraeli's Treasury official wrote to him:

"The Boundary Commissioners, or rather their staff, have had a very few hard days' work. Fremantle reports that with the exception of one - Sir F. Crossley - who is not very sympathetic with his colleagues - the Commissioners are perfectly harmonious". Sir Charles Rivers Wilson to Disraeli, 11, Downing Street, September 2nd, 1867, H.P., Box 147/2, Ref. B/XXI/W/396.

¹⁴ "I have had a stirring time with my 36 Ass[istan]t. Commissioners, but I hope the fruit will be reaped by their sending in all their Reports before the end of this month. The Chief Commissioners meet again on the 22nd and if the Recorder, Sir J. Duckworth and Walter, put their shoulders to the wheel...we shall have presented our Report...before Christmas. From what I have seen...the knotty points will not be many, and the whole subject ought to present but few real difficulties". C.W.Fremantle to Disraeli, October 6th, 1867, H.P., Box 128/2, Ref. B/XXI/F/281.

¹⁵ "Pray bear in mind that I am now every day either at home, or at the Boundary Commission office, from 10...until seven..." Lambert to Disraeli, January 10th, 1868, H.P., Box 47/2, Ref. B/XI/J/179.

England and Wales had been divided into eighteen districts as follows:

	<u>Area</u>	<u>Number of borough reports</u> ¹⁶	<u>Counties</u>
1	Eastern	9	2 (Essex and Norfolk)
2	Metropolitan	9 (Chelsea and Hackney)	0
3	Northern	15 (Darlington, Hartlepool and Stockton)	0
4	North Midlands	10	2 (Derbyshire and Lincolnshire)
5	North Western A	8 (Burnley)	2 (North and South Lancashire)
6	“ “ B	11 (Stalybridge)	1 (Cheshire)
7	South Eastern A	18	0
8	“ “ B	13 (Gravesend)	2 (West Kent and East Surrey)
9	South Midlands	13	0
10	South Western A	21	1 (Somerset)
11	“ “ B	16	1 (Devon)
12	Wales A	7	0
13	“ B	8	0
14	West Midlands A	9	0
15	“ “ B	8 (Wednesbury)	1 (Staffordshire)
16	“ “ C	12	0
17	Yorkshire A	12 (Middlesbrough)	0
18	“ B	8 (Dewsbury)	1 (Yorkshire, West Riding)
	Totals	207(11)	13

There were only eleven new borough, and thirteen county, reports. Seven new boroughs were in the North, one in the Midlands and three in the South (with two in London). Five of the new boroughs were in counties or county divisions that were redrawn, six were not.

¹⁶ New boroughs are in brackets and are included in the individual area totals. The changes made in 1868, the loss of seven further small boroughs in order to create eight new seats in Scotland, were not included in the Commission's work. The eighth Scottish seat came from grouping: for details, see the Chapter on Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The four disfranchised boroughs from 1867: Great Yarmouth, Lancaster, Reigate and Totnes were not reported upon.

The situation was as follows:

	<u>Borough</u>	<u>Counties altered</u>		<u>Borough</u>	<u>Counties unaltered</u>
1	Burnley	Lancashire, North East	6	Chelsea	Middlesex
2	Dewsbury	Yorkshire, West Riding	7	Darlington	Durham, South
3	Gravesend	Kent, West	8	Hackney	Middlesex
4	Stalybridge	Cheshire, North	9	Hartlepool	Durham, South
5	Wednesbury	Staffordshire, South	10	Middlesbrough	Yorkshire, North Riding
			11	Stockton	Durham, South

With regard to the alterations in the counties, six were in the South (including East Anglia), three in the Midlands and four in the North (including Cheshire). As for their characteristics, five were essentially agricultural, five industrial and three metropolitan. The Tory aim with the latter two groups was to isolate the industrial parts and sub-divide the remaining agricultural area into a new mid - division, thus doubling the party's representation. The counties were:

	<u>Type of County</u>	<u>Area</u>
	Agricultural	
1	Devon	South
2	Lincolnshire	Midlands
3	Lancashire, North	North
4	Norfolk	South
5	Somerset	South
	Industrial	
1	Cheshire	North
2	Derbyshire	Midlands
3	Lancashire, South	North
4	Staffordshire	Midlands
5	Yorkshire, West Riding	North
	Metropolitan	
1	Essex	South
2	Kent	South
3	Surrey	South
	Total	13

Middlesex, also, was effectively redrawn but via the creation of Chelsea, not through Disraeli's preference of county sub-division.

When the Commission reported, the key findings were:

	Category of constituency	Number	Details
	Boroughs, pre - 1867	196	
1	Proposed boundary extensions	81	
2	No extensions	115	
	New boroughs	11	
1	Proposed boundary extensions	4	Chelsea, Hartlepool, Stockton, Wednesbury
2	Proposed boundary contractions	5	Burnley, Darlington, Gravesend, Middlesbrough, Stalybridge
3	Proposed boundary extension and contraction	1	Dewsbury
4	No change	1	Hackney
	Counties	13	
1	Proposed boundary alterations	2	Somerset, Yorkshire, West Riding
	Total¹⁷	220	

The Boundary Bill, which was effectively the Commission's Report, was introduced on March 26th and passed its Second Reading, without a debate or vote, on April 20th. It then went into the Committee Stage on May 14th, having originally been scheduled for April 30th. The delay was caused by the debate on Gladstone's Irish Church resolutions. Initially, the reunited Liberals seemed not to want to accept the Commission's report at all. The party attack was concentrated almost entirely on the boroughs, leaving the counties unscathed, although they would, of course, be directly affected by any changes made.¹⁸ Criticism was led, in the first instance, by Bright and Gladstone, which could be ignored by Disraeli as just sour grapes. However, it also included more independent minded spirits such as Gaselee and Hibbert, which meant that it had to be taken seriously. The former was fairly blunt in publicly declaring Liberal objections to both Report and Bill:

"...the principle of the Bill...was to take away voters from the country and place them in the towns, thus eliminating the town...Liberal voters".¹⁹

¹⁷ Places for holding elections were changed in some other counties; these details are given in the various county entries. Also, in Cheshire and the Yorkshire, West Riding there were name changes.

Cowling, *op. cit.*, p. 385, n. 4, states that 222 inquiries were made but the Boundary Commission investigations total 220, both in the list of districts to be covered at the beginning of the Report, pp. ii-vii, and in the Index on pp. 477-8. See Parliamentary Papers: "Report of the Boundary Commission for England and Wales, 1868".

¹⁸ Disraeli's Chief Whip reported:

"...There has been a meeting at Devonshire House today, it is believed to settle how to oppose the Boundary Bill". Taylor to Disraeli, May 1st, 1868, H.P., Box 114/2, Ref. B/XX/T/113.

¹⁹ *Parl. Deb.*, 3, vol. 191, col. 1014, (23rd March – 8th May, 1868).

Gladstone claimed that the normal, and obvious, extent of the parliamentary boundary should be the same as the municipal one. He made the proposed loss of “proprietary franchises”, those historic county voters who would now have to vote in the more tawdry boroughs, into the 1868 equivalent of the compound householder from the previous year. They were mainly middle – class, suburban electors who had, with rare exceptions such as 1841 or 1859, voted Liberal since 1832. The pretence was moral: the preference to abide with tradition and to play a civic part in returning the county members. The actuality was psephological: wasted Liberal majorities in the great cities and towns. Gladstone formalised his objections against what was proposed by the Government into a demand for a Select Committee to deal with cases of difficulty. Disraeli did not have the option of playing for time. His Commons’ position was unstable after the Irish Church vote and with Derby’s resignation, the Lords could not be taken for granted. If he did not accede to the request, he might either have to go to the country on the new franchises but with the old boundaries, or return to the dark days of 1866 and watch in opposition as the Liberals dealt with the boundaries. He could hardly set up another inquiry so he tried to deal with the criticisms made about the Commission, taking them at face value, and so trying to sway independent Liberal opinion, as he had so successfully managed to do in 1867. He stressed both the integrity and non – partisan nature of the Commission’s findings. This was partly true but the outcome of its deliberations was believed to be strongly in the Tories’ favour. There are hints of tacit gerrymandering in the remaining, rather unsatisfactory, scraps of correspondence with the enigmatic Walter, unfortunately largely undated.²⁰ If, as is likely, he was the swing member of the Boundary Commission, in theory a Palmerstonian Liberal, whose main commitment was to preserve, and, if possible, extend landed influence, then his support was purchased by the minority vote clause,

²⁰ The index entry in Vincent: “Stanley Journals”, op. cit., p. 378, n. 24 (hardback version), misstates Walter as M.P. for Berkshire 1859-85. It was his temporary absence from the Commons, 1865-8, which gave Disraeli his opportunity.

which allowed him to reclaim his Berkshire seat in 1868.²¹ Disraeli claimed that the Boundary Commission had not been the Government's creation but that it had acted as "Parliament's trustee" in the matter. Nor had ministers appointed the Assistant Commissioners, who made the local recommendations. He wanted to refer disputed constituencies back to the Commission itself.

However, this did not work and after discussion "behind the Chair" Disraeli announced the creation of a Select Committee of five, chosen by the Government. It would investigate only those places which had formally petitioned about their proposed boundaries, which were thirteen in total. Documentary evidence would be allowed and the Committee would confer with the Commission.

These concessions were not quite enough and four days later, on May 18th, Disraeli effectively gave in to Radical, though perhaps not Gladstonian, demands. The Committee would consist of five members but they would be chosen by the Commons, or the Liberals, with only one county M.P. among them. The terms of reference were widened allowing any constituency, which had either petitioned or submitted materials, to be looked at again. This took the final number up to thirty-three, made up of twenty-nine old, and four new, boroughs.

Although Gladstone's desire to stop the Report wholesale had failed, a review of twenty-nine out of eighty-one, old boroughs and a further four, out of eleven, new ones was a serious loss of control.

²¹ Walter wrote:

"If you have a few minutes to spare this morning I should be glad to have a chat with you about the Boundary Report...

Be assured that I have not neglected...to urge my friends in the City to do all that you can desire...

If you think it necessary you will...see our mutual friend D. after the Debate...you may rest easy on yr. pillow and trust to his friendship and prudence.

I will give the hint you desire to the proper person and such publication cannot fail to put you quite right with the public". Walter to Disraeli, March 7th, 1868, "Thursday night" and undated, H.P., Box 146/4, Refs. B/XXI/W/115-7.

The published diarists inevitably saw things in a rather different way: Stanley was amicable and positive, Hardy much less sanguine.²²

The five Select Committee members were Bruce, Hodgson, Stirling-Maxwell, Walpole and Whitbread. Three were Liberal, two Tory, though Walpole was hardly a Disraeli supporter.²³ The following thirty-three constituencies were referred:

1	Birkenhead	12	Liverpool	23	Salisbury
2	Birmingham	13	Manchester	24	South Shields
3	Bolton	14	Marylebone	25	Tynemouth
4	Bristol	15	Newport, Isle of Wight	26	Warwick
5	Cheltenham	16	Newport, Monmouthshire	27	Wigan
6	Chester	17	Northampton	28	Wilton
7	Gateshead	18	Nottingham	29	Windsor
8	Gloucester	19	Oldham	30	Chelsea
9	Greenwich	20	Portsmouth	31	Darlington
10	Hastings	21	Preston	32	Middlesbrough
11	Lambeth	22	Reading	33	Stalybridge ²⁴

The Committee began its work on May 18th and reported its findings on May 29th.²⁵ It had divided the constituencies into three groups, consisting of eight where the Boundary Commission Report was recommended for adoption, ten where the Committee wanted modifications and fifteen where it wanted no change to the existing 1832 boundaries at all.

²² Stanley wrote:

"...House, where Boundaries Bill discussed, in a very conciliatory spirit on the part of the opposition. It was evident that they had found their party unwilling to agree on an attack, and they confined themselves to the fair and reasonable proposition of referring certain disputed cases to a committee. This we agreed to, but a good deal of difficulty and confusion arose as to the precise scope and functions of the committee. The debate, however, was perfectly good – humoured". Diary, op. cit., May 14th, 1868.

Hardy was less good – humoured:

"...On Thursday ev[en]ing. the Boundary Bill came on & after a talk it was agreed to have a Committee. I have made a great mistake in agreeing to names with Glyn & I fear there will be strong comments as he & Gladstone decline to change...Many troubles, the Committee on Boundary wh. mortifies me..." Diary, op. cit., May 17th, 1868.

²³ Biographical details are provided in the relevant county entries.

²⁴ Numbers 1 – 29 were old boroughs, 30 – 33 new.

²⁵ Parliamentary Papers: Report number 311, May 29th, 1868.

The categories were:

	<u>Constituencies where the Boundary Commission report was accepted in full</u>	<u>Constituencies where the Select Committee required modifications</u>	<u>Constituencies where the Select Committee wanted the existing boundaries to be retained</u>
1	Bolton	Chelsea (N)	Birkenhead
2	Chester	Cheltenham	Birmingham*
3	Greenwich	Darlington (N)	Bristol*
4	Newport (Monmouthshire) ²⁶	Gloucester	Gateshead*
5	Northampton	Hastings	Lambeth
6	Preston	Middlesbrough (N)	Liverpool
7	Stalybridge (N)	Newport (Isle of Wight)	Manchester
8	Windsor	Oldham	Marylebone
9		Salisbury	Nottingham*
10		Wilton	Portsmouth*
11			Reading*
12			South Shields*
13			Tynemouth*
14			Warwick*
15			Wigan*
	8	10	15 ²⁷

The Conservative attack on the Committee's work was led by Gorst, who carefully outlined the inconsistencies in what it had proposed.²⁸ He had either read and understood the details of the Select Committee report, or he had been very well briefed by Spofforth. The main theme of his criticism was the undue attention which had been paid both to those great towns which did not want their boundaries to be enlarged and to those suburbs and outlying districts which did not wish to be annexed to the existing boroughs. The first group claimed that they would be too big but Gorst argued that without extension they would be wholly unnatural communities. The second wanted to avoid incorporation due to loss of county status and dislike of having to pay municipal rates.²⁹

The Tories were worried by this attempted undoing of the Commission's work. Spofforth wrote to the local constituency agents in the affected seats and twenty-one

²⁶ This was not a separate parliamentary constituency but a contributory borough to Monmouth.

²⁷ (N) indicates a new borough; * shows where the parliamentary and municipal boundaries were identical.

²⁸ How far he was acting under instructions from Disraeli is unclear. Gorst was one of the two Tories for Cambridge 1866-8, winning his seat at a by-election in April. He was young, born in 1835, had his name to make and was just Disraeli's type of M.P.

²⁹ Parl. Deb., 3, vol. 192, col. 1259, (11th May - 25th June, 1868).

responded, as well as there being one county response from East Surrey and a presumably unsolicited answer from Stockton, which was not reviewed by the Committee.³⁰ From the details submitted, Thring drew up a schedule for Disraeli.³¹ The purpose of this research was to help him decide what to do, with various options under consideration.

As the Chairman, Walpole responded to Gorst's criticisms by explaining the course taken. He claimed that both bodies, Commission and then Committee, had received imperfect instructions, the local circumstances were often complex and each constituency had to be assessed individually. For instance, the Boundary Commission had only been given two points of reference, which were "local circumstances" and the need to incorporate "outlying districts". The Assistant Commissioners had then been instructed to consider "community of interest" as well. In the manufacturing areas, this was not always clear. "Continuous housing" had been a further consideration but if applied to Birmingham and Liverpool they would have been hugely enlarged.

Walpole then moved on to consider the thirty-three referred cases. In the four new boroughs, there had only been "minor differences" between the two bodies. In the pre-1867 boroughs, the situation was:

1	Number of old boroughs	196
2	No extension proposed	115
	There remained	81
3	Boundary Commission report should be adopted as to extension	52
4	Referred to Select Committee	29
5	Select Committee "practically agreed" with Boundary Commission report ³²	14
6	Select Committee did not think that boundaries should be altered	15

³⁰ Only Lambeth, Liverpool, Marylebone and Wilton seem not to have replied, or no record seems to have survived as to the local Tory response.

³¹ Although undated, it is clearly after the submission of the Select Committee's report. The individual responses are covered in the regional and county surveys; see H.P., Box 46/2, probably early June, 1868, Ref. B/XI/H/4.

³² It is not easy to accept Walpole's analysis of this category. The changes made by the Select Committee to Chelsea and Cheltenham put them in a "practically disagreed" category and had important electoral implications. The change made to Darlington was also not immaterial. For details, see the constituency profiles in the relevant county entries.

The Committee divided these fifteen, controversial, old boroughs where, it argued, the boundaries should not be extended into four categories of five, six, two and two seats respectively as follows:

	Large Boroughs	4	South Shields
1	Birmingham	5	Tynemouth
2	Lambeth	6	Warwick
3	Liverpool		Difficulties over Freeholders
4	Manchester	1	Bristol
5	Marylebone	2	Nottingham
	Lack of Community between Old and New		No Linkage
1	Birkenhead	1	Reading
2	Gateshead	2	Wigan
3	Portsmouth		

With the five large boroughs, except in the case of Liverpool, objections came from both within the borough, which claimed that it did not wish to be enlarged, and from the outlying county areas, which did not wish to be included. The proposed Boundary Commission changes would have taken the borough populations to c. 450,000 and would have decreased the surrounding county division to c. 100,000. In the second category, lack of community of interest between the existing borough and the planned area of addition was the reason given by the Committee not to proceed with the change. Over Bristol and Nottingham, the difficulties lay with the borough freeholders and where they were to vote, as well as the disinclination of county voters to become urban ones. Reading and Wigan had no sympathy, so the Committee claimed, with the areas to be integrated.

Walpole's summing – up was music to Liberal ears. He agreed with Gladstone that, where possible, municipal and parliamentary boundaries should be the same. He also stated that, where possible, counties should remain mixed communities with agricultural, commercial and manufacturing interests and that removing traditional county electors, in order to put them into monster boroughs, was not a good idea.³³ Whether these were Walpole's genuine views, or he was still smarting from his demotions of the previous year, or he was unduly influenced by his Disraeli – hating wife, is not clear: perhaps, all three ideas played a part.

For Disraeli, the key question was how to respond. The Liberals wanted to rubber – stamp the Report, the Tories preferred to take each constituency individually and to

³³ Parl. Deb., 3, vol. 192, cols. 1263-73, (11th May – 25th June, 1868).

try and retain the monster boroughs. The balance was held by Thring's report, which advised Disraeli as to what the impact would be in each of the twenty-five referred seats which the Commission wanted altered, and the position of the Radicals.³⁴

They took the view that they could press ahead. Hibbert proposed that all fifteen boroughs should stay as they were, without exception. The main defence of the Commission's work was mounted by Gurney.³⁵ He argued that the Commission was not political, unlike the Committee. He rejected all the criticisms made: the instructions to the Commission were not unclear and they were Parliament's, not the Government's. Future M.P.s for the great towns should represent the whole, not just a part of them. The need for the municipal and parliamentary boundaries to be "coterminous" had not been followed in the past: there were, at least, fifty boroughs where they were different such as at Brighton, Manchester or Warrington. Local objections to borough boundary extension were entirely due to the necessity of paying "municipal taxes" only and this had been taken into account by the Commission and had been rejected, where it was clearly unreasonable. Where boundary extensions had been proposed, the borough freeholders would continue to vote in the appropriate county. Hibbert's Amendment would effectively disfranchise c.400,000 potential new electors. Finally, the Select Committee had met for eleven days, the Commission for seven months.³⁶

When the debate ended, Hibbert's Amendment passed 184 -148. Quite why so few Tories turned up on such a crucial amendment is not obvious. Further divisions, firstly to extend the boundaries of Wigan and then to keep the Boundary Commission proposals for Darlington, were defeated by 131 – 91 and 135 -105 votes respectively.

³⁴ One Tory backbencher put it fairly clearly:

"If the [Boundary] Bill passed as amended by the Select Committee, it was a Bill which no Liberal Government in office could have carried". P.S.Wyndham, *ibid.*, c.1282.

³⁵ Osborne termed him:

"...the real presiding genius of the Boundary Commission". *ibid.*, c. 1430.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, c. 1418. In the course of the debate Bright said:

"There is no Select Committee, no ingenious Minister, no ready tools, no Spofforth, who can so manipulate the boundaries of boroughs in this country as to bring about a change in the preponderance of political power", *ibid.*, c. 1416.

In the Lords, Beauchamp led the attempt to reverse the Commons' vote, moving the main Government amendment on July 2nd, with specific reference to the boundaries of Birkenhead and Birmingham, the former to include Wallasey, the latter Balsall Heath.³⁷ He used very similar arguments to Gurney's in the Commons, simply adding that the Commissioners had also taken into account both the number of properties constructed since 1832 and the availability of land for building within and without the existing borough boundaries.

It was at this stage that the Whig leaders in the Lords accused the Government of a breach of faith, claiming that Disraeli had previously said that the whole matter had been "settled" by the Commons. Clarendon, Granville, Halifax and Russell then walked out of the Lords. Such a mare's - nest was excellent vaudeville, though tough - minded Hardy remained remarkably unimpressed.³⁸ Nevertheless, however artificial the method of protesting might have been, it worked and the next day, Beauchamp withdrew his Amendment. Disraeli effectively gave in, having decided on a November election, assuming that the new registers were prepared in time. The charge of clinging to office, in the changed circumstances since the end of April, was becoming too politically damaging and defeat on the Boundary Bill raised the nightmare prospect of an election on new franchises with existing boundaries.³⁹ This decision meant that the Select Committee's gerrymandering, which made up for the Liberal failure in 1866, would now pass.

There were two final attempts by the dissident Tory peers to re - open the boundaries. On July 6th, Ravensworth proposed adding Jarrow to South Shields, which was defeated by 27 - 9. The next day Redesdale tabled a general Amendment protesting about the Government's whole way of proceeding, in general, and including the non - extension of Glasgow's boundaries, in particular.

³⁷ He wrote:

"I am to see...Gurney this afternoon in reference to the Boundary Bill...I am very anxious that the amendments should be framed today and after seeing you...I propose going on to...Malmesbury". Beauchamp to Disraeli, June 2nd, 1868, H.P., Box 101/4, Ref. B/XX/Ln./59. As M.P. for West Worcestershire from 1863-6, Beauchamp had excellent local knowledge of the Birmingham boundary question, though Balsall Heath actually affected the Eastern Division of the county: for full details of both the issue and Beauchamp, see the Worcestershire section of the chapter on the Midlands.

³⁸ He wrote:

"In the Lords breach of faith was complained of on the Boundary Bill most unjustly & the Liberal peers withdrew. It is a base mode of proceeding. Disraeli's remarks bear no such meaning as they give them..." Diary, op. cit., July 3rd, 1868.

³⁹ Whether this was the case is examined in the section on Disraeli's premiership.

This, too, was defeated by 53 -17.⁴⁰

The Select Committee's changes to the fifteen large towns and cities, whose boundaries were not to be changed, were as follows:

	Old Boroughs	County/County Division	Area to remain	Population ⁴¹
1	Birkenhead	Cheshire, West	Poulton-cum-Seacombe	4,200
2	Birmingham	Warwickshire, North	Aston	20,000
		Worcestershire, East	Balsall Heath	10,500
	<i>Sub-total</i>			30,500
3	Bristol	Gloucestershire, West	Bishopston	5,000
			St. George	12,500
		Somerset, East	Bedminster	2,500
	<i>Sub-total</i>			20,000
4	Gateshead	Durham, South	Felling	
			Heworth	
			St. Alban	
	<i>Sub-total</i>			10,000
5	Lambeth	Surrey, East	Clapham	
			Lambeth (part)	
			Streatham	
	<i>Sub-total</i>			57,000
6	Liverpool	Lancashire, South West	Bootle	11,800
			Walton-on-the-Hill	3,750
			West Derby	21,000
			Wavertree	6,685
	<i>Sub-total</i>			43,235
7	Manchester	Lancashire, South East	Crumpsall	
			Droylsden	
			Gorton	

⁴⁰ The newly created 3rd Marquess of Exeter, a Cecil, wrote to complain:

"Matters...are now considerably and...dangerously altered by the overthrow by the Government of the recommendations of the Boundary Commissioners as regards the large towns. I was in hopes that in the...Lords the decision came to in the H. of Commons as regards Birmingham, Glasgow & other towns, would have been reversed & their boundaries restored to what the Commissioners recommended in their Report...the Government within H. of Lords had given in, & I was not even allowed to vote yesterday with Lord Ravensworth...The question is now coming on again under Lord Redesdale's auspices on the Third Reading...[I] offer to resign my appointment [Captain of the Gentlemen at Arms]". Exeter to Disraeli, July 7th, 1868, H.P., Box 47/2, Ref. B/XI/J/182.

The Tory die-hards were:

William Alleyne Cecil, 3rd Marquess of Exeter, succ. Jan., 1867; 1825-95; M.P. (Con.) Lincolnshire, Kesteven and Holland 1847-57, Northamptonshire, North 1857-67; minor office-holder, 1866 and 1874-5; seat, Burghley House, Stamford, Lincolnshire.

Henry Thomas Liddell, 2nd Baron Ravensworth; b. 1797; seats, Ravensworth Castle, Gateshead, Darlington and Eslington Park, Northumberland.

John Thomas Freeman - Mitford, 2nd Baron Redesdale; 1805-86; cr. 1st Earl of Redesdale, 1877; Chairman of Committees and Deputy Speaker, House of Lords, 1851-86. Disraeli called him:

"...narrow, prejudiced, and utterly unconscious of what is going on in the country..." Stanley Journals, op. cit., p.352, n. 21.

⁴¹ The population figures are sometimes approximate because neither Commission nor Committee always included the necessary figures.

			Moss Side	
			Openshaw	
			Rusholme	
			Stretford (part)	
	<i>Sub-total</i>			45,000
8	Marylebone	Middlesex	Hampstead	
			Hornsey (part)	
			Willesden (part)	
	<i>Sub-total</i>			40,000
9	Nottingham	Nottinghamshire, South	Lenton	5,680
			Radford	13,315
			Sneinton	11,048
			Standard Hill	1,180
			Wilford	50
	<i>Sub-total</i>			31,273
10	Portsmouth	Hampshire, South	Forton & Camden Town	4,500
			Gosport	7,257
			Hardway	750
			Newtown & Bury	3,000
	<i>Sub-total</i>			15,507
11	Reading	Berkshire	Southern Hill	
			Whitley Road	
	<i>Sub-total</i>			1,000
12	South Shields	Durham, North	Jarrow	15,000
13	Tynemouth & North Shields	Northumberland, South	Howdon Pans	
			Willington Quay	
	<i>Sub-total</i>			8,000
14	Warwick	Warwickshire, South	Leamington Spa	
			Lillington	
			Milverton	
	<i>Sub-total</i>			23,542
15	Wigan	Lancashire, South West	Ince-in-Makerfield	8,266
	<i>Overall sub-total</i>			352,523
	Other Old Borough			
1	Cheltenham Spa	Gloucestershire, East	Charlton Kings	5,000
	New Boroughs			
1	Chelsea	Middlesex	Chiswick	6,000
	<i>Sub-total</i>			6,000
2	Darlington	Durham, South	Cockerton	1,000
			Haughton-le-Skerne	575
				1,575
	Total			365,058

This was more than mere tinkering. If the Tory settlement of 1867 had not been quite destroyed, it had certainly been most seriously compromised. The whole thinking and planning behind the huge franchise expansion of the previous year was predicated on the understanding that the new voters, and their unknown political inclinations and prejudices, would, at least, be in the correct constituency, by removing suburban growth and borough over - spill from the county divisions. With approximately 35% of the expanded electorate in the wrong seat, the Conservative Government's plans and dispensations now looked oddly awry. Quite how far the Liberals had been able to redress the balance requires consideration on a constituency, county, regional and national basis. However, before that is undertaken, Disraeli's position as Prime Minister in 1868, and why he was prepared to accept a significant undoing of his great achievement from 1867, needs to be considered.

CHAPTER 7: PRIME MINISTER.

The special session of Parliament, which met on November 19th, 1867, was called to deal with the crises over Abyssinia and Fenian threats and outrages. Ironically, given the change of leadership in the New Year, Derby was well in the autumn and gave no hint of political mortality, indeed the opposite, at the Conservative meetings held in Lancashire in October. These grand occasions, and Disraeli's similar sojourn to Scotland, were held both to rally, and to assess, support and to help convince a possibly sceptical electorate as to motivation.¹

Disraeli missed some of the November Cabinets at the end of the month, due to ill health. In time, he recovered but Derby was struck by another serious and debilitating attack of gout in January 1868 and, on medical advice, he decided to resign office.² Disraeli's accession to the premiership was, rather surprisingly in view of all that had gone before, uncontroversial and uneventful within the party.³ There was no real alternative, assuming that Stanley meant what he said and the promotion was the reward for the triumph of 1867. Although it was a very early example of Gladstonian meritocracy at work, Disraeli's path was certainly cleared by the aristocratic patronage and wholehearted recommendation of Derby.

Disraeli had major plans for an "annus mirabilis" in 1868 over a whole range of issues, which included health, education, concurrent endowment in Ireland and ending, rather than continuing and encouraging, electoral bribery. This demarche had been flagged previously in June 1867:

"Much conversation with G[ladstone]. this morn[ing]. D'I's programme of a new policy in the Globe, whereby the country gentlemen and Dukes are to be led still more strongly by the nose into the mire. It is a remarkable document. "That won't do", G. said".⁴

¹ "...I think it w[oul]d. be a good stroke of policy if y[ou]r. chief were to state in some way...that the Gov[ernmen]t. was activated by a sincere desire to do the best thing for the country, politically speaking, in passing the Bill last session.

It has hitherto rather too much appeared that they did the best thing for the party, that they were determined, come what may, not to be "ousted" on the question of Reform...it has been...made too salient a point on one or two occasions by many of our people & has been fairly laid hold of as rather an unstatesmanlike grievance by our opponents". Barrington to Corry, October 28th, 1867, Travellers' Club note paper, H.P., Box 88/3, Ref. B/XX/Ba./6.

² The final chapter in Pollard, op. cit., is a rather sad and loyal account of Derby's brief retirement and his death in autumn 1869.

³ As with Rosebery in 1894, Disraeli's elevation was very much the Queen's doing.

⁴ Phillimore Diary, op. cit., June 7th, 1867.

The link between the acceptance of Hodgkinson's Amendment in 1867 and the progressive initiatives to be taken as Premier in 1868 were outlined and linked together. He, also, needed to complete the three outstanding Reform Bills on Redistribution, Ireland and Scotland. Further time was needed to allow the tacit deals struck in 1867 to be enacted, such as Torrens's Artisans' Dwellings Act. The loss of parliamentary control at the end of April did not lessen the initial audacity of the planning.

Disraeli held his first party meeting as premier on March 5th.⁵ Cabinet changes were kept to a minimum, partly to maintain continuity and also to avoid making enemies in an already unstable situation. There was no rapprochement with the traitors of 1867. Cairns replaced Chelmsford as Lord Chancellor, Walpole left his ministry without portfolio and Ward Hunt became Chancellor of the Exchequer.⁶ The foreign policy situation necessitated Northcote staying at the India Office. The greatest difficulty lay with education, both over personnel and policy. The issues were: how far reform should proceed, whether or not an entirely new government department should be created and what the position of the Duke of Marlborough should be.⁷ Urban and liberal Conservatives required some element of rate aided education, partly along the lines of what came to pass in 1870, whilst rural and landed Tories wanted to retain much of the voluntary system as run by the Church of England. Not surprisingly, neither Marlborough's resignation, nor a new education department, came about.

Disraeli's main Cabinet allies were Cairns and Hardy. The former had no ambition to supplant his leader. He was regularly consulted before Cabinet and not just about

⁵ Hardy was guardedly complimentary in his Diary, partly because Disraeli did not say very much: see the entry for Friday, March 6th, 1868.

⁶ Walpole wrote:

"I have so long felt that my position in the cabinet was so anomalous, & in some respects, constitutionally speaking, so untenable...[I] request permission to retire from it". Walpole to Disraeli, February 26th, 1868, H.P., Box 146/3, Ref. B/XXI/W/75.

Over Ward Hunt, Derby was supportive:

"...Hunt's promotion is a rapid one, but I think he will justify your selection..." Derby to Disraeli, *ibid.* from Knowsley, H.P., Box 41/1, Ref. B/IX/F/9.

⁷ Derby cautioned:

"You must also bear in mind that if the Education Department be withdrawn from the Presidency of the Council, you must count on the resignation of the Duke of Marlborough, which would considerably weaken the Government..."

The Duke of Marlborough is a man of a very resolute will & personally is entitled to every consideration..." Derby to Disraeli, January 11th and February 5th, 1868, H.P., Box 110/3, Refs. B/XX/S/471 & 482. The January letter was from Knowsley.

legal affairs.⁸ The only drawback over Cairns's appointment as Lord Chancellor was the implication for the Anglican Church in Ireland.

It meant that Disraeli's scheme for concurrent endowment would have to be shelved for the sake of both cabinet and party unity.⁹ Hardy, also, was consulted regularly beyond his purely departmental brief. He continued to be Disraeli's main supporter, on domestic questions, in the Commons, and was in effect Deputy Leader of the House. He received the Boundary Commission Report in February, and then oversaw the Boundaries, Corrupt Practices, Irish and Scottish Bills through the 1868 session. This was a major legislative and parliamentary burden as Gladstone's Irish Church resolutions purposely tended to put the whole question of reform into the background and made progress on the whole raft of Government legislation difficult. As one of the party's Kentish mafia, Hardy was also closely involved with election planning, a commitment and interest which is less noticeable with other senior colleagues.¹⁰

Disraeli also needed help in the Lords.¹¹ The potential difficulties can be seen in the feelers that were sent out to Granville via the society homeopathist, Dr. Quin. There seems to have been at least an informal offer of the Lords' leadership and perhaps an implicit offer of the premiership. How seriously either were forwarded is open to interpretation. Whatever the actuality, Granville turned the offer, or offers, down and sneaked to Gladstone.¹² With this door closed, the new Lords' Leader was Malmesbury, Derby's rather careless deputy from 1867. He did not possess the latter's authority and there was a tendency to react too quickly without fully considering the implications, especially over the party's situation in the Commons.

⁸ "I could meet you & Hardy with the draft of an answer tomorrow at Downing St. half an hour before the Cabinet (i.e. ½ p. 1). Cairns to Disraeli, May 8th, 1868, H.P., Box 91/1, Ref. B/XX/Ca./30. There are similar brief notes (in the same box) for June 5th, July 6th and July 12th.

Holiday addresses were important, doubly so as election planning was necessary, and were forwarded:

"I send you below a note of where the post [will] find me for the next month, in case Disraeli wishes to communicate with me". Cairns to Corry, August 31st, 1868, H.P., Box 42/2, Ref. B/X/B/70.

⁹ "I saw Childers today. He professes to wish to keep us in this Session, regrets Cairns's appointment as showing you are not going to deal with the Irish Church, which Gladstone means to insist on your doing". Lord Henry Gordon-Lennox to Disraeli, February 28th, 1868, H.P., Box 102/4, Ref. B/XX/Lx./279.

¹⁰ "At one today...there is to be a meeting of the Whips, and Lords Nevill and Colville, at my rooms here about our organisation for dissolution. Northcote is to be there I hope, and I should be very glad if you could come". Disraeli to Hardy, June 13th, 1868, Cranbrook Papers.

¹¹ He was advised by Colville:

"I think it of great importance that you should at once address a Circular to the Peers who have usually supported Lord Derby..." Colville to Disraeli, February 28th, 1868, H.P., Box 41/2, Ref. B/IX/F/32.

¹² The matter is discussed in Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice: "The Life of Lord Granville, 1815-91", Volume 1, Chapter XVIII, pp. 519-20.

These infelicities apart, Malmesbury worked well enough with Disraeli.¹³ There was some evidence of pre-planning but not all exigencies could be covered. For instance, although Russell had formally retired as Liberal leader in the Lords, he was still very active, thus making the House far more hostile to the Government than would have been the case in his absence.¹⁴ Derby, who was in a good position to judge, certainly thought that Malmesbury had done well enough.¹⁵

Somewhat unexpectedly, Disraeli's elevation to the premiership rather disarmed the party's "Cave". Bath accepted diplomatic office. Knightley came round, if not in a personal sense, then in a party one.¹⁶ Sandford's justification was the most enlightening, regarding Derby's actions as beyond the pale but Disraeli's as to be wholly in character.¹⁷

The key political question in 1868 was whether the peculiar parliamentary circumstances of 1867 would continue, or whether a reunited Liberal party, which came together under Gladstone on the issue of the Irish Church, on April 30th in the Commons, would force a vote of no confidence.¹⁸ Acutely aware of this possibility and having ditched the Whigs in 1867, Disraeli simply had to keep the support of the Radicals, if he was to complete his Reform legislation. However, Radical support could be Janus – faced and Scotland's number of M.P.s rather encapsulated the potential difficulty. Disraeli tried to keep Scottish Radicals on board by thanking them in the Commons on May 21st for their help in passing the legislation of 1867. This attempt at Gaelic ingratiating was necessary because he could not offer them as many new seats as they wanted, nor deserved. If he did, then he must re – open the complex

¹³ "...but whenever I think your direction desirable, I want a general "Cascia popare" to you about that hour". Malmesbury to Disraeli, March 5th, 1868, H.P., Box 99/3, Ref. B/XX/Hs./139.

¹⁴ "You seem to have begun smoothly enough yesterday – but it would appear that Lord Russell, though he has formally abdicated the Leadership, has not relinquished the post of objector in Chief in the Lords". Derby to Disraeli, March 6th, 1868, H.P., Box 110/3, Ref. B/XX/S/484.

¹⁵ "Malmesbury acquitted himself better than I ever heard him. John Russell was feeble and spiteful, and very discursive – Malmesbury...was deservedly cheered when he sat down; and as none of the Opposition gave Russell any support...I think, in leaving town tomorrow for ten days, I may congratulate you on being master of the position for the remainder of the Session, which I presume you will close as soon as you can". Derby to Disraeli, May 29th, 1868, from St. James's Square, H.P., Box 110/3, Ref. B/XX/S/493.

¹⁶ "Knightley who was at Longleat gave us to understand that he had made up his quarrel with his party". Malmesbury to Disraeli, September 13th, 1868, H.P., Box 99/3, Ref. B/XX/Hs./151.

¹⁷ "...[Sandford] tells me that he feels less hostility to a Government with you at the head, than to one led by Lord Derby – what you did last session might have been expected of you from your known opinions, but Lord Derby's conduct was unpardonable.

He added that he had heard of no rumours of attack which were likely to come to anything: - this he said with a disappointed air that amused me". Corry to Disraeli, February 27th, 1868, H.P., Box 41/1, Ref. B/IX/F/28.

¹⁸ Two months after this vote, on June 29th, the Lords defeated the Irish Church Resolutions, 192 – 97.

questions of either the overall size of the Commons, or the settlement in England, which would jeopardise English Radical support. Overall, by limited “Justice for Scotland”, by concession over the boundaries of the great cities and towns, by the further loss of a handful of sacrificial small boroughs and by making a serious attempt at anti – corruption legislation, the Radicals remained true to their Tory leader. Their go – between wrote:

“1) We Radicals are very jubilant about Disraeli being Premier.

2) Below [the] gangway we are not so enamoured with the old Whig clique as to wish them to return to office too soon.

3) I much mistake if the bulk of the men who sit below the gangway on our side will do anything to put Disraeli out unless compelled by principle – for mere party objects, no, no”.¹⁹

Although White, a merchant, was an expert on budgetary and financial, rather than electoral, matters, he correctly calculated that support for Disraeli in 1867 – 8 would achieve more Radical demands than bringing about the possibility of another internecine Liberal battle, along the lines of 1866.²⁰ The means of communication remained via the corridors and rooms at Westminster, Disraeli’s private office and his public statements over both intentions and policy, largely, but not exclusively, delivered in the Commons’ chamber. There was, of course, nothing specific in writing: no smoking gun, no binding contract and no formal alliance. There was, instead, an informal, working agreement, conducted via intermediaries. Reaction was then fed back to Disraeli for assessment.²¹

There was a general political feeling, certainly amongst the Radicals, that the Government was safe until the general election, to be held either in November 1868 or February 1869, depending upon parliamentary progress on the four outstanding

¹⁹ James White to Lord Henry Gordon-Lennox, February 27th, 1868, H.P., Box 102/4, Ref. B/XX/Lx./279a.

²⁰ His best appreciation of Disraeli was from the 1870s, when he was no longer M.P. for Brighton. He wrote:

“If the Tories would consent to be wholly guided by their astute leader, I do believe they might have a long innings. Disraeli to retain power would willingly give the country Liberal measures but is it possible having such a majority? The tail too often moves the head of a party (and what a dreadfully stupid tail Disraeli has)...” White to Bright, February 17th, 1875, White Papers, op. cit., DM 668. The holding consists of 43 letters to White from various, mainly Radical, correspondents and this one copy of an out – letter.

²¹ “I have just seen White...he and others...wanted to keep the Government in...Disraeli’s speech seems (from White’s account) to have pleased them”. Lord Robert Montagu to Colonel Taylor, April 4th, 1868, H.P., Box 114/2.

Reform bills and the compilation of the new electoral registers.²² One of the major reasons for this Radical acceptance of Disraelian government was the widespread belief that redistribution by instalment was the best way to proceed. It was often enough stated in debate that the settlement of 1868, be it forty – five seats as in 1867 or the fifty – two ones that it was to become during the course of the year, was simply insufficient and that a new Parliament, elected on the franchise of 1867, would seek to re – open the question at the earliest opportunity. A further consideration, which necessitated care on the Radicals' part, was the possible trump card of Disraeli calling a dissolution over the cry of "Tory Democracy", or its 1868 equivalent, with the Liberals cast as the enemies of liberty, progress and reform.²³ Defeat over both the Irish Church in April and Scottish rating in May gave the Prime Minister the opportunity to dissolve. This would end the charge of clinging to office but it would also preclude seeing reform through and reclaiming the mantles of 1829 and 1846. The matter was finely balanced and Disraeli received much advice as to the best course of action.²⁴

The Liberal position, too, was not straightforward. Whilst the party was clearly re – united over the Irish church, it was still disunited over reform. It could quite legitimately claim that Disraeli was clinging to office after the end of April but to bring him down via a no confidence motion with redistribution incomplete, opened the party up to the separate charge of factious opposition. Whether such a motion could be passed was never put to the test, the implication being that it would have failed. In order to avoid a re – run of 1866, possibly involving Adullamites, the Lords and the small boroughs, the party leadership came to an implicit compromise: the Tories would settle the reform issue for the Liberals and they, in their turn, would deal with the Irish Church question.

²² Lennox reported:

"Lowe and Delane...admitted your statement of Monday was excellent and...with great regret confessed that you had got the Whip Hand of them for this Session". Lord Henry Gordon-Lennox to Disraeli, May 17th, 1868, H.P., Box 102/4, Ref. B/XX/Lx./291.

²³ "He [Robert Lowe] asked me what I understood by Disraeli's speech, for he said people were of two minds, whether it meant Dissolution on the 10th of March or Dissolution under the new Franchises". Lord Henry Gordon-Lennox to Disraeli, March 18th 1868, H.P., Box 102/4, Ref. B/XX/Lx./283.

²⁴ The following letter was a good example of the genre:

"...if again beaten after Easter, a dissolution on the present constituency is our best and only card to play. I have said so for the last two months. I am sure of it. With a good Protestant cry we should probably gain. We should postpone an Election under the new constituency till 1870 – at least – throwing on the other party the onus of postponing the people's new franchise by their factious conduct". Sir George Jenkinson to Disraeli, April 6th, 1868, H.P., Box 132/3, Ref. B/XXI/J/33.

In order to reassure his Radical friends, for the second year in a row, the Budget was impeccably correct, covering increased expenditure on the Abyssinian expedition with a rise in direct taxation. The economic slump failed to improve much during the course of the year and when election planning began, "Hard Times" were apparent.²⁵

There were other matters which had to be attended to, as well, such as the cost of county elections, which, if not corrected, had the potential to harm the party's prospects in its heartlands.²⁶ Inevitably, Church politics and patronage took an inordinate amount of time to try and reconcile the competing claims and perspectives but it was necessary as there was a real danger of the party's prospects suffering if matters were mishandled.²⁷ Hardy, who was in a good position to know as the closest remaining Cabinet member to the High Church renegades of 1867, feared the possible electoral consequences.²⁸ The press, also, remained a serious concern, with continuing attempts made to find friendly writers.²⁹ The party's love – hate relationship with "The Times" continued through till the election.³⁰

The Tory campaign began in August with Disraeli's speech at the Merchant Tailors' Hall. The registration was important and there were particular areas of local concern, in particular the malt tax and local rates, which were soon highlighted as reports came

²⁵ "...I should be glad if you would have a Cabinet summoned for Tuesday next [Bad revenue figures and the need for Admiralty cuts]". Ward Hunt to Disraeli, October 9th, 1868, H.P., Box 100/3, Ref. B/XX/Lx./283.

²⁶ "...the necessity of getting rid of the Clause which was carried against you yesterday...by which...all the expenses of a contested Election for a County of Borough are to thrown upon the...rates...I should hope you would have no difficulty (if you can get your officials to attend) in rescinding this most mischievous vote!". Derby to Disraeli, n.d., but 1868, St. James's Square, H.P., Box 110/3, Ref. B/XX/S/497.

²⁷ "...the see of Peterborough is about to be vacant...This will probably be your first vacancy...We are suffering in the country from the impression that prevails that our good Bishop of Oxford is at the bottom of your Ecclesiastical Patronage and how much damage it is doing to our Election prospects. Spofforth confirms this in the sharpest manner but it reaches me from many independent channels. It is the more provoking as the High Church are really not true to us on the Irish Church question...If you want a vacant deanery to which you could appoint...some eminent man of the Evangelical party, this is...your best opening". Rose to Disraeli, August 8th, 1868, H.P., Box 308/2, Ref. R/I/B/119.

²⁸ "I have many complaints of the neglect of High Churchmen which I only send to you in bulk. No doubt we may feel some effect from it at the election". Hardy to Disraeli, October 14th, 1868, H.P., Box 98/3, Ref. B/XX/Ha./45.

²⁹ "Shirley Bushy can be made of use. He is principal writer in Punch and writes their essence of Parliament. The political articles in The Illustrated [London] News are by him, and he writes sketches in Parliament for the same paper". Charles Russell to Corry, July 18th, 1868, H.P., Box 42/4, Ref. B/X/C/16a.

³⁰ "...give the information to such papers as you please: only not The Times". Disraeli to Corry, August 16th, 1868, H.P., Box 95/2, Ref. B/XX/D/82.

in to the leadership from individual counties and constituencies.³¹ Stanley was gloomy about the party's prospects from the outset and although this was in keeping, the evidence suggests that the campaign went against the party, or failed in winning over either the old voters from 1865 or the new ones from 1867, where they had registered, in sufficient numbers to alter the balance.³² Not only was Disraeli a quite hopeless psephologist and reader of public opinion but also his Chief Whip, Taylor and Scottish election manager, Fergusson were equally inept at trying to read the runes.³³ The most percipient analyses before voting came from the civil servant Lambert and the member of the House of Lords, Derby: perhaps absence from the Commons brought insight. Lambert wrote:

"...it seems impossible for the Government to win...In my march in the West Country I have looked in at some of the public meetings and I am surprised at the extreme popularity of Mr. Gladstone. It is quite clear that the new voters, in most instances, consider the proper definition of Gladstone to be "the timely ambassador of public favours".³⁴

Derby's analysis was forwarded in November:

"I have just received the List of candidates...and am sorry to see so many seats abandoned without a struggle, and so many more of which the Representation is not decided, and in which we are bringing forward only one candidate against the enemy's two, thus incurring the risk of loss without the possibility of gain...

...in England, looking at all the sets in which we have a fair prospect of success, I cannot bring the numbers up to above 242...if my calculations are right, your number will not exceed 305...a number...ample for a strong Opposition..."³⁵

³¹ "It is most important that the £12 qualification should be thoroughly attended to...as it is the sheet anchor of our county strength". Spofforth to Conservative agents, June 1869, H.P., Box 49/2, Ref. B/XI/N/2c.

³² His father wrote:

"Stanley's language as to the result of the Elections is absolute despondency. He hardly seems to think the battle worth fighting". Derby to Disraeli, Knowsley, August 2nd, 1868, H.P., Box 110/3, Ref. B/XX/S/498.

³³ The wrong predictions are dated September 21st – 23rd, 1868, and are in H.P., Boxes 112/1 and 114/2, Ref. B/XX/S/816 for the first box and Refs. D/93 and T/114 for the latter.

³⁴ Lambert to Disraeli, October 3rd, 1868, H.P., Box 133/3, Ref. B/XXI/L/10.

³⁵ Derby to Disraeli, from Knowsley, November 3rd and 14th, 1868, H.P., Box 110/3, Refs. B/XX/S/503-4.

Derby was too optimistic:

	<u>Country</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Liberal Majority</u>
1	England and Wales	824,057	1,231,450	407,393
2	Ireland	36,082	53,379	17,297
3	Scotland	23,391	123,410	100,019
	Totals	883,530	1,408,239	524,709
	<u>Seats</u>			
1	1865	295	364	69
2	1868	272	387	115

Hardy wrote:

“In small boroughs we are unlucky...County & large towns in England do well but Scotland & Ireland! Eheu!”³⁶

The two, main, unpublished contemporary studies of this seemingly disastrous result for the Conservatives set out to try and show that urban, household, rated, residential suffrage was not quite the error that it appeared to be. The conclusions arrived at were that the small boroughs were by no means Tory strongholds (nor had they ever been so), the counties remained grossly under – represented, disfranchisement should have been extended up to a population level of 15,000 at least and that there was clear evidence of a popular conservatism both in the Home Counties and in Lancashire. When redistribution was next raised by the new Liberal election expert, Sir Charles Dilke, in 1875, Disraeli might not have listened too carefully, flushed as he was with his great triumph of the previous year.³⁷ However, Salisbury did.

³⁶ Diary, op. cit., Thursday, November 19th and Tuesday, November 24th, 1868.

Disraeli's Roman Catholic friend, Sir George Bowyer wrote:

“Thus the elections were made under a total misunderstanding of what W.E.G. intended to do [over the Irish Church]. The appeal to the country was made under false pretences so far as W.E.G. was concerned”. Bowyer to Disraeli, January 16th, 1869, H.P., Box 119/3, Ref. B/XXI/B/721.

³⁷ The electoral analyses are R. Dudley Baxter: “The Results of the General Election with an Appendix containing Summaries of the Electors”, 1869 and C. Keith Falconer: “General Election, 1868”, August 3rd, 1871, Conservative Central Office, H.P., Box 41/2, Ref. B/IX/G/70. This Report is covered in R. Shannon: “The Age of Disraeli, 1868-81: The Rise of Tory Democracy”, 1992, pp.120-1, which is Volume 2 of Longman's series: “A History of the Conservative Party”. Salisbury's article on Redistribution is in “The National Review”, Number 20, October 1884, entitled: “The Value of Redistribution: a note on Electoral Statistics”. Dilke's resolution on “The Representation of the People” was introduced on July 15th, 1875 and was defeated, after a short debate, by 190-120. He also raised the question in 1873, though no vote took place.

CHAPTER 8: EAST ANGLIA.

The region covered seven counties: the three, large coastal ones of Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk and the four, small inland communities of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and Huntingdonshire. East Anglia's M.P.s, before and after the 1867-8 Acts, were as follows:

	County	1832-67			1868-85		
		County	Borough	Sub-total	County	Borough	Sub-total
1	Bedfordshire	2	2	4	2	2	4
2	Cambridgeshire	3	2	5	3	2	5
3	Essex	4	6	10	6	4	10
4	Hertfordshire	3	4	7	3	1	4
5	Huntingdonshire	2	2	4	2	1	3
6	Norfolk	4	8	12	6	4	10
7	Suffolk	4	7	11	4	5	9
	Totals	22	31	53	26	19	45

These forty-five M.P.s, from 1868 onwards came from twenty-four separate constituencies. The net loss of eight seats was, in fact, worse than it looked as half of the region's lost borough M.P.s had been brought about by the earlier disfranchisement of both St. Albans and Sudbury, both of which were double member seats. The borough losses in 1867-8 were brought about as follows:

	County	Seat loss	Reason	Party Balance
1	Essex	Harwich	D	-1C
		Maldon	D	-1C
2	Hertfordshire	Hertford	D	-1L
3	Huntingdonshire	Huntingdon	D	-1C
4	Norfolk	Great Yarmouth x2	B,B	-2C
		Thetford x2	D,S ¹	-1C,-1L
	Total	8		-6C,-2L

This disastrous culling for the Tories of the small boroughs in the region was off-set by the increase in the county representation for both Essex and Norfolk, with the outcome being that there was no change, after all, over the reforms of 1867-8.²

¹ "B" means disfranchised fro bribery and corruption; "D" equals Disraeli's original disfranchisement limit of 7,000 population in 1867 for; "L" will be for Laing's increase in disfranchisement up to 10,000 population for a borough's second M.P. and "S" is for the Scottish settlement of 1868.

² The re-allocated St. Albans and Sudbury seats were dealt with in 1861 and are considered under the entries for Cheshire, South Lancashire and the Yorkshire, West Riding.

Of the twenty-four constituencies which existed from 1868 onwards, twelve borough and twelve county, Disraeli had a good working knowledge of eleven and no obvious understanding of the remaining thirteen.³ He was better on the counties than the boroughs, though there is no evidence at all that he knew anything about either Cambridgeshire or Huntingdonshire, and he was hazy on Norfolk. He was sensible on the other four counties. As for the boroughs, he knew nothing about eight of them and the four about which he did have a working understanding came via individual tip – off rather than statistical evidence, such as Stanley at King’s Lynn or Baxter at Norwich. The summary of his understanding of the region’s seats was:

	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>No Knowledge</i>
<u>Boroughs</u>	4	8
<u>Counties/County Divisions</u>	7	5
Totals	11	13

The obvious weakness in the settlement for the Tories, in a region from which the party would have looked to have made gains from the 1867-8 redistribution, was the failure to divide Suffolk into a third county division. This was a grievous error. In all seven counties but particularly with the three, large, sea-board ones, the major agricultural question was the malt tax and how, and how soon, to repeal it. As for possible new boroughs, there were only three realistic possibilities: Lowestoft, Luton and West Ham. Lowestoft would have made up for the loss of Great Yarmouth and would have rectified the region’s borough losses. Luton was included in Disraeli’s plans and its claims were pushed hard by Bedfordshire’s county Tories, in order to get rid of it but it had to make way for the northern settlement. West Ham was the key issue and the Conservatives thought that they could not possibly hold on to South Essex if it remained but the 1865 “Reform Parliament” hated London (apart from its own, Liberal, M.P.s) and increased representation for the capital was akin to getting blood from a stone. There was clear evidence of commuting to London, especially in South Essex and, to a more limited degree, in South Hertfordshire. The railway was obviously having an impact everywhere, as can be seen in the changes noted as far away from London as Norwich was.

Figures given for both electorates and populations are the ones used by Disraeli, so far as is known, then corrected, if required, and supplemented. Coverage of the general

³ In the individual county tables, where Disraeli knew about a seat’s politics, this is indicated by a “K”.

election results from 1859-80 allows for 1867-8 to be seen in perspective. By-election results are dealt with on an individual basis where this is relevant. They were much more indicative of political change, or stasis, than would be the case today but they were still by-elections. The 1859 General Election should be regarded as the first proper, party, conflict as such since 1841, with both the coming together of the non-Tory coalition and the resulting end of the Peelites/Protectionist split within the party. Mention is made, where relevant of the 1857 contest, but nomenclature, especially on the Tory side, is sometimes indecipherable, without recourse to detailed study of the local newspapers. In any case, the 1857 General Election did not set the party leadership thinking about reform and redistribution, whereas the 1858-9 minority administration and the 1859 General Election most certainly did.

Biographical details of Conservative M.P.s in the 1865 Parliament are included, where they played a part either through parliamentary debate, or via letter writing, or by offering Disraeli support. They are a rather neglected species and have not left extended details of their doings. Over half of them served in the Army at some stage of their lives, with a good number seeing service in the Crimean war.

As for the maps, there are two separate categories, which have been arranged by region, county and borough. First, the hand-etched, 1832, county maps, indicating the represented boroughs were the ones used by Disraeli for gaining an understanding of the post-1832 settlement, and for trying to comprehend its injustices and how they could be rectified. Secondly, are the Boundary Commission maps for 1867-8, which cover all boroughs in England and Wales, which were incorporated into the 1867 Representation of the People Act and the eleven, new, county divisions and the two sub-divisions of already existing ones, South Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire.

Bedfordshire

The county had four M.P.s, two for the county and two for the sole represented borough of Bedford for the whole of the 1832-85 period.

The results for the 1859-80 General Elections were:

	<u>1859</u>	<u>1865</u>	<u>1868</u>	<u>1874</u>	<u>1880</u>	<i>Sub-totals</i>
<u>County</u>	1C,1L	1C,1L* ⁴	1C,1L*	1C,1L*	2L	4C,6L
<u>Bedford</u>	1C,1L	1C,1L	2L	1C,1L	2L	3C,7L
Totals	2C,2L	2C,2L	1C,3L	2C,2L	4L	7C,13L

Bedfordshire rather bucked the trend noticeable in other, southern, counties of moving to the Tories after 1868. there were no boundary or redistribution issues, nor new or lost seats to be considered in the county's politics during 1867-8. However, there nearly was. Although not in Disraeli's initial Bill, Luton was added following Laing's Amendment but it did not survive, once Horsfall's motion for increasing the representation of the four largest, provincial, towns was passed.⁵ Gilpin's claim on behalf of Luton (and Dunstable) was perfectly justified. The local petition and memorial highlighted the key points, which were that, by 1867, Luton's population was c.23,000, constituting one-sixth of the whole county, making it far larger than Bedford itself, and that within a radius of five miles (from Luton), the figure rose to c.40,000.⁶ Almost certainly, any new such seat would be Liberal but its creation might well have allowed the Tories to win the second county M.P. However, because a large number of hat makers were women, who accounted for a disproportionate percentage of the rise in the local population, Luton's claims were challenged in the Commons in

⁴ * indicates that no contest took place. Where the contests were intra-party affairs, that has been taken as a contest; where only a cursory vote was obtained, that has not been taken as being a proper contest.

⁵ The Conservative county M.P. wrote in support of the claim:

"...in reference to this county...its size, its number of electors...in 1854...Russell proposed to give us a third member chiefly owing to the increase of population in the towns on this [southern] side, viz. Luton, Dunstable and Leighton [Buzzard]. I remember your having told me that in 1859 the state of affairs was considered...[Luton's] population now amounts to some 20,000 and is increasing. Dunstable with an identity of interests and whose population has increased and is increasing...is now brought by railway into immediate communication with it. Luton applied to the last administration to grant it one representative, joined to Dunstable. I think it would have a claim! Unless there is to be a monopoly given to the northern towns against which I protest...Colonel R.T.Gilpin to Disraeli, November 12th, 1866, H.P., Box 128/3, Ref. B/XXI/G/86.

⁶ The memorial stated:

"...the completion of the Midland railway...will greatly...augment...population...Luton...is purely a manufacturing district, having little identity of interest with the greater part of the county...the number of persons engaged in the staple trade of the town and outlying districts is upwards of 60,000". Memorial from Luton, n.d., H.P., Box 48/1, Ref. B/XI/K/17. St. Pancras station was joined with the Midland Railway in 1868. King's Cross station was opened in 1862. The town's staple trade was hat making.

July 1867.⁷ The Liberals would be no better off with such a settlement and, as a general rule, the party did not like creating new seats in the South, at northern expense.

As the only possible, new, industrial constituency in the South, its case was a strong one but it did not happen because of competing demands, more vociferously advocated, from elsewhere.⁸

The county seat was divided between the parties until 1880, when the Liberals won both M.P.s. However, the 1872 by-election indicated what might have happened if Luton had been taken out of the county.⁹ Both this result and the 1880 contest indicated that the county was moving away from the Tories and that Luton (and Dunstable) was the party's problem. Bedfordshire's details were:

Electorate	1859	4,701	Population	1861	135,287
	1865	4,845 ¹⁰		1871	129,407
	1868	6,680		1881	129,929
	1874	6,874			
	1880	7,133			

The election centre for the county was Bedford and the main landowners with political influence were Bedford, Page-Turner and Pym.

⁷ Opposition was led by Denman, the Liberal M.P. for Tiverton. Gilpin had moved that Tiverton, plus three other boroughs with populations just over the 10,000 threshold, lose their second M.P. to provide for Luton and elsewhere; see *Parl. Deb.*, 3, vol. 188, cols. 1228-50, (13th June – 23rd July, 1867). The matter is also covered in Cowling, op. cit., p. 320.

⁸ Derby wrote:

“...the only points which remain...concern the rival claims of East Surrey, Luton and Keighley. I do not see how we can defend the exclusion of the latter [Keighley] to make way for the former [Luton] and if Luton must be admitted and the political reasons for it are strong, I see no mode of doing it but by sacrificing East Surrey though...” Derby to Disraeli, June 9th, 1867, H.P., Box 110/3, Ref. B/XXI/S/434.

⁹ Derby [the 15th Earl] wrote:

“It is expected that a Conservative will be returned for Bedfordshire – the county squires would have allowed a Russell to sit, though not agreeing in his politics...” Derby Diaries, op. cit., June 7th, 1872. The actual result was: F. Bassett (Lib.) 2,450, W. Stuart (jnr.) (Con.) 2,250, Liberal majority 200. This was the first contest since 1859 when R.T.Gilpin (Con.) polled 2,027 votes to W.B. Higgins (Lib.) 1,583, in third place, Conservative majority 444. In 1880, the Liberal majority for the winning, second place over the losing Tory in third, was 588.

The 1872 by-election was triggered by the death of the 8th Duke of Bedford. Derby penned an appreciation of sorts:

“He had been for many years in bad health, unable to walk, and seldom leaving London. His wealth gave him no enjoyment...His rental exceeded £300,000: certainly the largest fortune possessed by any landowner, though in the next Ld. Westminster will have more. He saved much, and spent little, in which he will be imitated by the new Duke”. Ibid., May 27th, 1872. The new, 9th, Duke was F.C.H.Russell, 1819-91, M.P., (Lib.), for the county, 1847-72.

¹⁰ The figure includes 125 out-voters who were resident outside the county.

Gilpin was Disraeli's electoral brains for the seats.¹¹

The borough, too, moved to the Liberals with the party winning both seats in 1868 and 1880. The Tories just gained the second seat in 1874 by only four votes.¹²

Bedford's details were:

Electorate	1859	927	Population	1861	13,413
	1865	1,106		1871	16,850
	1868	2,127		1881	19,352
	1874	2,213			
	1880	2,603			

In conclusion, there was no change to Bedfordshire as a consequence of 1867-8.

Cambridgeshire

Disraeli had no correspondence about the county's politics. There were two seats only, the tripartite county and the borough. Cambridge's boundaries were extended with some resulting effect on both itself and the county constituency. The General Election results were:

	<u>1859</u>	<u>1865</u>	<u>1868</u>	<u>1874</u>	<u>1880</u>	<i>Sub-totals</i>
<u>County</u>	2C,1L*	2C,1L*	2C,1L	2C,1L*	2C,1L*	10C,5L
<u>Cambridge</u>	2C	2C	2L	2C	2L	6C,4L
Totals	4C,1L	4C,1L	2C,3L	4C,1L	2C,3L	16C,9L

The only contest of note for the county was the Tory by-election victory in February 1884, when Speaker Brand went to the Lords.¹³ If it had not been for the minority vote clause, the Conservatives would have contested the third seat in 1874-80. The clause did not, in itself, alter Cambridgeshire's representation.

¹¹ William Russell, 8th Duke of Bedford, succ. 1861; 1809-72; (Lib.); Woburn Abbey, Bedford; owned 32,269 acres (the whole county measuring 296,320 acres); unmarried.
Sir Richard Thomas Gilpin; 1801-82; M.P., (Con.), Bedfordshire 1851-80; colonel; knighted 1876, on which Hardy commented favourably in his Diary for February 1st; residence, Leighton Buzzard.
W.F.Pym; (Con.); appointed principal party agent, Middlesex, 1869; owned 1,500 acres at Sandy.
¹² By contrast, the Liberal majorities for the second seat in 1868 and 1880 were by 472 and 280 votes respectively. The brewer, Samuel Whitbread, 1830-1915, was one of the Liberal M.P.s for Bedford continuously from 1852-95. The Tory cause in the borough was led by F.C.Page-Turner, M.P. from 1874-80, who owned 2,600 acres outside Bedford.
¹³ He became Viscount Hampden. The Tories won by 3,915-2,812, doubling their majority since 1868.

The county seat's details were:

Electorate	1859	7,157	Population	1861	149,655
	1865	7,060		1871	152,910
	1868	9,512		1881	144,716
	1874	10,104			
	1880	10,023			

The only election centre for the county was Cambridge. The Tory cause was led by the Earls of Hardwicke, the Liberal one by the neighbouring Duke of Bedford.¹⁴

The borough details were:

Electorate	1859	1,797	Population	1861	26,361
	1865	1,769		1871	33,996
	1868	4,000		1881	40,882
	1874	4,428			
	1880	4,806			

The Boundary Commission made the following changes:

	Direction	Area	Number of Houses	Population
1	North	New Chesterton	350	1,500
2	North East	Chesterton Village	333	1,450
	Totals		683	c.2,950

Chesterton Village was an area of “tradesmen and mechanics...having occupations in the town”, whilst New Chesterton was comprised of “artisan housing”.¹⁵ The effect of these changes was to make the city more Liberal and the county marginally more Tory. This can be seen in the Conservatives winning both city seats only once in 1874, after the 1867-8 Acts and the Liberal acceptance of Tory dominance in the county.¹⁶ The majorities between the winning, second-placed and losing, third-placed

¹⁴ Charles Philip Yorke, 4th Earl of Hardwicke, succ. 1834; 1799-1873; Lord-in-waiting, 1841-6, resigning over Corn Law repeal; Postmaster-General, Feb.-Dec. 1852, Lord Privy Seal 1858-9; owned 19,000 acres at Royston.

Charles Philip Yorke, Viscount Royston, 5th Earl of Hardwicke, succ. 1873; 1836-97; M.P. (Con.) Bedfordshire 1865-73; Controller of the Queen’s Household, 1866-8; see Vincent, op. cit., March 21st, 1862 for the possibility of him being the original “Champagne Charlie”, eventually becoming bankrupt. A member of the family was M.P. for the county, 1832-79.

The Duke of Bedford owned 19,000 acres in Cambridgeshire out of a total of 550,000.

¹⁵ Boundary Commission report for Cambridge.

¹⁶ By contrast the Tories had won both city seats in 1857-65 inclusively.

candidates in the respective elections held (including contested by-elections), with the party voting totals for the three General Elections from 1868-85, in the city, were:¹⁷

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Majorities</u>		<u>Party Voting Totals</u>		
	<u>Borough</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Majority</u>
1859	C67	N/a			
1863	C81	N/a			
1865	C34	N/a			
1866	C19 ¹⁸	N/a			
1868	L421	C574	2,825	3,736	L911
1874	C20	N/a	3,650	3,512	C138
1880	L323	N/a	3,905	4,712	L807
1884	N/a	C1,103			
Total			10,380	11,960	L1,580

As matters balanced out, there was no change to Cambridgeshire as a consequence of 1867-8.

Essex

The county was an obvious candidate for increased representation. Both northern and southern county divisions had genuine claims to be sub-divided but to do this for both, in a predominantly Tory and agricultural county, though one seriously affected by London suburban growth in the latter division, could be too much for the Liberal majority in the Commons. Two, out of the three, represented boroughs were each to lose one M.P., namely Harwich and Maldon, which reinforced the county's claim. There were two particular issues which required Disraeli's attention. The first was what to do about Stratford and West Ham. The second was where to draw the boundaries of the new county divisions: although it was essentially the old northern seat which disappeared, the new, eastern and western seats did not simply split the old one in two.

Ideally, Disraeli's solution to the question of Stratford and West Ham would have been to incorporate the areas into the new constituency of Hackney, which was the

¹⁷ By-election figures given are always for the winning, first-placed candidate over the losing, second-placed one.

¹⁸ John Gorst was elected at the April 1866 by-election but then came bottom of the poll in November 1868. On Gorst, see J.R.Vincent: " 'A Sort of Second-Rate Australia': A Note on Gorst and Democracy, 1865-8", in "Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand", 15, 1971-3, pp. 539-44. Gorst can best be described as an anti-reformer in 1866-8, though one of rather lower social consequence than the better known leaders of the Tory "Cave". The article speculates as to Gorst's motivation in pushing for Conservative organisation in the early 1870s, a little different, perhaps, to his better known advocacy of party democracy in the 1880s.

northern half of the old, undivided Tower Hamlets seat. However, this would have entailed cutting across county boundaries, as Hackney was in Middlesex and West Ham was in Essex.¹⁹ Whilst the metropolitan Radicals wanted additional London seats, they did not want enormous, wasted, Liberal majorities and their preference was for a new West Ham constituency, as was to be created in 1885. Disraeli's other difficulty over it was that if a new seat was created out of South Essex, it would be more difficult, on population grounds, to justify a new county division. He was well advised over what to do with the two, sitting, Tory M.P.s, both elected for the first time in 1865, writing extensively.²⁰ Disraeli own notes indicated his understanding of the likely outcome if Stratford and West Ham were not removed:

"Voted at last election (1865) in Stratford	2,108
Proposed increase to the electors of South Essex by adding those at £12 rateable value and under £50	6,477
Of this number there will be added in Stratford and West ham, not including the increase by the lodging scheme, about	2,700

The lodger franchise will render Stratford the returning power over the county".²¹ The outcome was the division of Tower Hamlets and the creation of Hackney but the keeping of the two metropolitan suburbs in South Essex.

This then allowed for a new county division to be created and shifted matters to the boundaries.

¹⁹ The very clear boundary between the two ran from the East India docks, along Bow Creek and down the middle of the main branch of the River Lea. A copy of Disraeli's hand drawn map about the border is enclosed in the Essex county collection: see H.P., Box 44/1, fol. 195v. for the original.

²⁰ "For long [South Essex] has been an agricultural and therefore a Conservative constituency, but from the great strides that London has lately made into it, at Stratford and West Ham, before long it will be overpowered by the urban element as Surrey is at the present moment, and Stratford and West Ham will really nominate the members for South Essex. They run into the heart of the Tower Hamlets with a population of 70,000, and in any division of their borough might fairly be incorporated in it – if they were not made into a separate metropolitan borough. Once free from the London influence, South Essex would retain its agricultural character, and for the future there would be little fear of its losing its Conservative tendencies". Henry Selwyn [later Sir Henry Selwyn-Ibbetson] to Disraeli, Dec., 1866, from Harlow, H.P., Box 142/2, Ref. B/XXI/S/103.

"...more than a third of the constituency...is metropolitan in its character and interests and but very few years will elapse before the agricultural element is altogether swamped. The population of the parish of West Ham was 59,319 in 1861...Lord Eustace Cecil to Disraeli, January 2nd, 1867, H.P., Box 47/1, Ref. B/XI/J/62.

Biographical details on both M.P.s are provided in the West Essex constituency profile.

²¹ Disraeli's notes, undated, H.P., Box 44/1, Ref. B/XI/D/79.

By the mid-1860s the two Essex divisions were as follows:

		<u>Northern</u>	<u>Southern</u>
Population (1861)		162,441	207,270
Inhabited Houses		35,544	39,130
Electorate (1867)		5,773	7,173
Hundreds of:	1	Clavering (W)	Barstable (S)
	2	Dunmow (W)	Becontree (S)
	3	Freshwell (W)	Chafford (S)
	4	Hinckford (W)	Chelmsford (S)
	5	Lexden (E)	Dengie (E)
	6	Tendring (E)	Harlow (W)
	7	Thurstable (E)	Ongar (W)
	8	Uttlesford (W)	Rochford (E)
	9	Winstree (E)	Waltham (W)
	10	Witham(E)	Haverling (Liberty of) (S)

The local Tory agent submitted the above plan (Number 1) with the new boundaries for the East, South and West seats. However, the Liberals drew up their alternative (Number 2) and this was the one which was included in the 1867 Reform Bill. Only three hundreds were changed but they were crucial to the political balance: Chelmsford to be in the West, Hinckford in the East and Rochford in the South. The implication was that if this was not done the Commons would amend it and Disraeli hoped that the Boundary Commission would make the necessary adjustments.²²

²² The North Essex Tory M.P. wrote:

"The enclosed letter...from our head...agent in N. Essex reached me this morning...unless the present proposed Divisions...be greatly altered...the Conservative cause will suffer there very materially at the next election as even under the existing electoral body a county which could return 4 Con[servative]s. is proposed to be so divided as to give the Liberals at least half, if not a majority, of the representatives". Sir Charles Du Cane to Disraeli, June 27th, 1867, H.P., Box 48/1, Ref. B/XI/K/12a.

The long and detailed letter from the agent in part read:

"I went up by invitation from the Ch[ancellor]. of the Ex[chequer]. To have an interview with him on the subject of the distribution of seats for Essex. I was then shown a Plan (No. 1) prepared in the Dep[artmen]t...I was surprised to see lately in the newspapers a Plan (No. 2) as the one actually submitted to the House. I hear that a Liberal meeting was held a few days ago in Braintree for its consideration by which, (and no wonder) it was highly applauded. I have drawn out a comparison of Plans No. 1 & No. 2 – founded on the votes actually given...in 1865.

You will see that by the original Govt. Plan (No. 1) a fair Con[servative]. Majority is shown in East and West Essex and a Liberal majority in South Essex – whereas, by the Plan (No. 2), West Essex is allowed to be superfluously strong, whilst East Essex is made a debatable ground – thus giving the Liberals a capital chance of 3 seats out of 6, even without the reduction of the franchise. With it, I will not venture upon a prediction.

The 1865 General Election result, using the two plans indicated the difference:

Plan 1: Conservative agent				Plan 2: Liberal alternative			
	1 st Con.	2 nd Con.	Lib.		1 st Con.	2 nd Con.	Lib.
<u>East</u>	1,528	1,423	1,176	<u>East</u>	1,778	1,632	1,648
<u>South</u>	1,710	1,629	1,819	<u>South</u>	1,362	1,326	1,588
<u>West</u>	1,644	1,525	1,283	<u>West</u>	1,742	1,619	1,042
Totals	4,882	4,577	4,278	Totals	4,882	4,577	4,278

The figures indicated that of the county’s fifteen polling districts, the Liberals beat the second Tory in only five: Braintree, Brentwood, Colchester, Stratford and Witham. Conservative strength was more broadly spread with the strongholds at Chelmsford, particularly Epping and Hedingham. With the Commission completely ignoring the party’s wishes, the Tories found their whole hold on the county seats threatened by what appeared to be a wholly unbalanced settlement with both Chelmsford and Epping in the new West seat. The Commission’s justification was balance of population, not party political interest. The figures were:

<u>(North) East</u>	127,898
<u>(North) West</u>	111,071
<u>South</u>	130,742 ²³

The Essex General Election results from 1859-80 were:

		<u>1859</u>	<u>1865</u>	<u>1868</u>	<u>1874</u>	<u>1880</u>	<i>Sub-totals</i>
<u>County</u>							
1	<u>Eastern</u>	N/a	N/a	2C	2C*	2C	6C
2	<u>Northern</u>	2C*	1C,1L	N/a	N/a	N/a	3C,1L
3	<u>Southern</u>	2C	2C	2L*	2C	2C	8C,2L
4	<u>Western</u>	N/a	N/a	2C*	2C*	2C	6C
<i>Sub-totals</i>		4C	3C,1L	4C,2L	6C	6C	23C,3L
<u>Boroughs</u>							
1	<u>Colchester</u>	2C	1C,1L	2L	2C	2L	5C,5L
2	<u>Harwich</u>	1C,1L	2C	1C	1C*	1C	6C,1L
3	<u>Maldon</u>	1C,1L	2C	1L	1C	1L	4C,3L
<i>Sub-totals</i>		4C,2L	5C,1L	1C,3L	4C	1C,3L	15C,9L
Totals		8C,2L	8C,2L	5C,5L	10C	7C,3L	38C,12L

I had lately an opportunity of showing these figures to Ld. Rayleigh". A.C.Veley, North Essex Conservative agent to Sir Charles Du Cane, June 26th, 1867, H.P., Box 48/1, Ref. B/XI/K/12b. John James Strutt, 1st Baron Rayleigh, cr. 1821; 1796-1873; owned 8,600 acres at Witham.
²³ County population figures always exclude the represented, or to be represented, boroughs, unless otherwise stated. "North" was dropped from the division names in 1868.

The County Divisions

East Essex was made up of the eastern half of the pre – 1867 Northern Division with the addition of Dengie from South Essex.²⁴ All of the county's trio of parliamentary boroughs were now in this one county seat. The Tories returned both M.P.s, in what was mainly an agricultural constituency, on all three occasions, from 1868-80. However, there were important, though small, centres of industry, nonconformity and radicalism at Braintree, Coggeshall and Halstead. The election results were:

	Conservative	Liberal	Majority
<u>1868</u>	5,677	4,358	C1,319
<u>1874</u>	N/a	N/a	N/a
<u>1880</u>	2,626 ²⁵	2,369	C257

The constituency details were:

Electorate	1868	6,564	Population	1861	127,898
	1874	6,453		1871	129,711
	1880	6,380		1881	123,492

The famous Southern Division remained interesting for what did not happen. Both sitting M.P.s bolted for greener or more agricultural, pastures in 1868 and the Tories did not even contest the seat in that year.²⁶ The pusillanimity and stupidity of this decision can be seen when battle was properly rejoined in 1874-80:

1874		1880	
<u>Con.</u>	3,646	<u>Con.</u>	4,841
<u>Con.</u>	3,528	<u>Con.</u>	4,726
	7,174		9,567
<u>Lib.</u>	2,735	<u>Lib.</u>	4,324
<u>Lib.</u>	2,728	<u>Lib.</u>	4,147
	5,463		8,471
Majority	793		402

²⁴ The final hundreds were: Dengie, Hinckford, Lexden, Tendring, Thurstable, Winstree and Witham.

²⁵ The Tory figure is the average for the two candidates' votes, as the Liberals only ran one. There were obviously no Conservative M.P.s for the seat in the 1865 Parliament. The M.P.s after its creation were: S.B.R. Brise, M.P. 1868-83 and James Round, M.P., Essex East 1868-85, Harwich 1885-1906. Brise owned 2,000 acres in the county and Round 5,000 at Colchester, which was finally chosen as the election centre, after the Commission's provisional selection of Braintree was altered.

²⁶ The reason is hinted at in the following letter:

"...the farmers and stockowners of the Eastern counties...are up in arms about the recent opening of Thames Haven as a port for landing foreign cattle and transferring them alive by train to the London markets...we cannot afford to lose agricultural support in Essex – they take the Reform Bill like angels..." C. Du Cane to Corry, November 10th, 1867, H.P., Box 42/2, Ref. B/X/B/23.

One, perhaps over-looked, factor which helps to explain this unexpected Tory success in the Division was the extension of the railway and, therefore, the enhanced opportunities for the party's City workers to commute. Liverpool Street station was opened in 1874 and completed lines by then included to Chelmsford via Ilford, to Loughton via Chipping Ongar and Epping, and to Southend via Barking and Stratford.²⁷

The Southern Division details were:

Electorate	1859	6,669	Population	1861	207,270
	1865	7,338		1871	181,278
	1868	7,173		1881	296,752 ²⁸
	1874	8,713			
	1880	11,950			

In its final version, the constituency ran all along the north bank of the Thames, from urban West to rural East, covering Becontree, Havering, Chafford, Barstaple and Rochford, in that order.²⁹

The old, pre- 1867 Northern Division returned two Tories at every election from 1832-59 inclusively. The loss of the second seat in 1865 by fifty votes clearly indicated that the new boundaries would require careful thought. Liberal strength lay in the divisional capital of Braintree and in the unrepresented towns. Conservative support was strong at both extremities of the constituency, around Dunmow, Saffron Walden and the agricultural areas in the west and in the three coastal hundreds from Harwich down to Maldon. The Tory M.P. in the Reform Parliament was the intelligent backbencher, Du Cane.³⁰

²⁷ Before 1874, Bishopsgate and Shoreditch were the termini for the Eastern Counties railway.

²⁸ The changes in population are due, firstly, to the contraction of the seat in 1868 and then to the growth of East London in the 1870s, which can be seen on the 1885 map, with regard, in particular, to Leyton, Stratford, Walthamstow and West Ham.

²⁹ The absconding M.P.s are covered in the entry for West Essex. The leading Liberal landowner in the seat was the 12th Baron Petre, who owned 19,000 acres at Brentwood, which was the election centre from 1868-85; from 1832-67 it had been Chelmsford.

³⁰ Sir Charles Du Cane, 1825-89; M.P. (Con.) Maldon 1852-3, Essex North 1857-68; succ. 1850; m. Lord Lyndhurst's daughter, 1863; Civil Lord of the Admiralty, July 1866-August 1868; Governor of Tasmania 1869-74; Chairman, Board of Customs, 1878-89; translated "The Odyssey"; opposed both the malt tax and educational rates but supported the extension of the franchise; owned 5,400 acres at Braxted Park, Witham.

In the west of the Division, the leading Tory landowner was the 5th Baron Braybrooke, who owned nearly 10,000 acres at Audley End, Saffron Walden.

The details were:

Electorate	1859	5,510	Population	1861	162,441
	1865	4,904			
	1867	5,773			

The last county seat was the overly Tory, Essex West created in 1868. Its details were:

Electorate	1868	5,479	Population	1861	111,071
	1874	5,889		1871	115,874
	1880	5,732		1881	112,829

There were no contests in 1868-74 and in 1880 the party safely returned both M.P.s in a thoroughly appalling year.³¹ The Conservative Members were the morally execrable renegades from South Essex.³² Selwin-Ibbetson was effectively the leader of the Eastern counties' opposition to the malt tax and, as with the majority of his colleagues, was happy to support franchise extension, so long as inquiry into the possible repeal of the malt tax followed.

The Borough Seats

Conservative borough strength in Essex was based on the port of Harwich. Colchester was a classical marginal and followed national trends, whilst Maldon was more Conservative than not. None of the three boroughs saw any changes made to their boundaries. Disraeli received both great support and an equal amount of vitriol from Essex Conservatives. Sandford Peacocke and Earle between them made Maldon into

³¹ Of the eight hundreds in the constituency, four each came from the pre-1868 Northern and Southern divisions. They were: Clavering, Dunmow, Freshwell and Uttlesford from the former and Chelmsford (the election centre), Harlow, Ongar and Waltham (including Epping) from the latter. The 1880 result was: Con. 2,530, Lib. 1,772, Con. majority 625. The Tory total is for the average for the two candidates' vote, as the Liberals only ran one candidate. The majority is for the winning, second-placed, Tory over the losing, third-placed, Liberal. Where similar circumstances apply in other constituencies, the # sign symbolises this.

³² Lord Eustace Cecil, 1834-1921; M.P. Essex South 1865-8, Essex West 1868-85; Surveyor-General of the Ordnance 1874-80.

Sir H.J.Selwin-Ibbetson, 1826-1902; M.P. Essex South 1865-8, Essex West 1868-92; 2nd Church Estates Commissioner 1885-6 and 1886-92; owned 2, 100 acres at Harlow.

The leading Tory landowners were Colonel T.H.Bramston who owned 5,400 acres and J.L.Tufnell-Tyrell, 3,100 acres, both near Chelmsford. About the latter's property, his daughter wrote:

"...I think papa has 900 houses [in Chelmsford]. Mrs. Sarah Ormsby Gore to Corry, November 3rd, 1868, H.P., Box 41/2, Ref. B/IX/G/52.

the most anti-Disraeli constituency in the whole of England. Earle was insignificant but his colleague was not. Disraeli was advised:

“...on the principle of not having Martello towers behead one, would it not be prudent to offer (if yet in time) something to Sandford... - he has influence over 2 other seats besides his own & has qualities that might make him troublesome if a malcontent”.³³

On the other hand, Major Jervis in Harwich was greatly in favour.³⁴

The county capital of Colchester remained finely balanced both before, and after, 1867-8. The Liberals won both seats in 1868 and 1880, the Tories in 1874.³⁵ Disraeli knew nothing of its politics. Its details were:

Electorate	1859	1,257	Population ³⁶	1861	23,809
	1865	1,405		1871	26,343
	1868	2,970		1881	28,395
	1874	3,183			
	1880	3,713			

Harwich was both a port, as the major embarkation point for Holland, and a Victorian seaside town.³⁷ The Tories easily won the two seats in 1865, losing one in the 1867 redistribution. The contests afterwards were:

	Conservative	Liberal	<i>Conservative majority</i>
1868	328	141	187
1880	368	310	58

³³ Lytton to Disraeli, n.d., H.P., Box 104/3, Ref. B/XX/Ly./161.

Stanley did not seem to be overly concerned. He wrote acidly:

“...The Conservative secessionists, of whom the most active is Sandford, lately known as Peacock (he changed his name) are now styled “the Peacock’s tail”. It is not a long tail”. Diary, op. cit., April 9th, 1867.

³⁴ Major H.J.W.Jervis, 1825-81; M.P. (Con.) 1859-80; author of military books and “History of Corfu and the Ionian Islands”. The boundary change was of a technical nature only, involving the low water mark but no electors. Although there is no extant correspondence from Jervis, with regard to Harwich, Disraelian knowledge of the constituency has been assumed. As with Colchester, it moved from the old Northern Division to Essex, East after 1867.

³⁵ There was also a Tory by-election victory in 1870. Hardy termed Colchester “a small borough” in his Diary (November 19th, 1868) and also commented about the by-election:

“Our success at single Elections is remarkable”. Diary, op. cit., November 4th, 1870.
The party voting totals, 1868-80, including the by-election were: Con. 9,963, Lib. 9,622; excluding it, Con. 8,600, Lib. 8,769.

³⁶ From 1832-67, Colchester was in the Northern Division, from 1868-85 in Essex, East.

³⁷ It was at the mouth of the Rivers Orwell and Stour.

The seat's details were:

Electorate	1859	334	Population	1861	5,070
	1865	386		1871	6,079
	1868	622		1881	7,810
	1874	712			
	1880	759			

Maldon, also, lost its second M.P., and, in this case, Disraeli was probably very pleased.³⁸ Its details were:

Electorate	1859	1,071	Population ³⁹	1861	6,261
	1865	859		1871	7,151
	1868	1,397		1881	7,128
	1874	1,522			
	1880	1,564			

As the Tories had always at least shared the town's representation and had won both seats at four separate general elections since 1832, the end of the second M.P. was their loss, because the Liberals won three of the four contests held between 1868-80.⁴⁰

They were:

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Majority</u>
1868	504	657	L153
1874	632	519	C113
1878	530	671	L141
1880	651	679	L28
Totals	2,317	2,526	

In conclusion, there was no alteration to the political balance in Essex as a result of 1867-8, with the Tory gains in the county being balanced by the party's losses in the two disfranchised borough seats.

³⁸ The Conservative M.P.s in the 1865 Parliament were:

R.A.Earle, 1835-79, M.P. (Con.) Berwick-upon-Tweed 1859, Maldon 1865-8. Earle's animosity towards Disraeli seems to have been based on the natural jealousy towards a new court favourite. Whether there was more to it, of a personal nature, remains a matter for conjecture.

G.M.W. Sandford-Peacocke, d. 1879; M.P. (Con.) Harwich 1852-3, Maldon 1854-7, 1859-68, 1874-8. When he was still on writing terms with Disraeli, Salisbury wrote of Maldon:

"...Sandford...is a stronger man than many I have heard you name [as Under-Secretary for India]: he controls a seat – Ralph Earle's – which is a consideration not to be lost sight of". Salisbury to Disraeli, July 6th, 1866, H.P., Box 92/1, Ref. B/XX/Ce./7.

³⁹ From 1832-67, Maldon was in the Southern Division; from 1868-80 it, too, moved to Essex, East.

⁴⁰ The Tory general election victories were in 1837-41, 1854 (a re-run of 1852) and 1865.

Hertfordshire

In the 1832 settlement, the county had seven M.P.s. However, the disfranchisement of St. Albans due to corruption, the loss of the second borough M.P. in Hertford and the failure, either to divide the county or to add a new borough, meant that its representation was severely reduced to just four Members in 1868.⁴¹ The General Election results were:

	<u>1859</u>	<u>1865</u>	<u>1868</u>	<u>1874</u>	<u>1880</u>	<i>Sub-totals</i>
<u>County</u>	2C,1L*	2C,1L	1C,2L	2C,1L	2C,1L*	9C,6L
<u>Borough</u>	1C,1L*	1C,1L*	1C	1C*	1C	5C,2L
Totals	3C,2L	3C,2L	2C,2L	3C,1L	3C,1L	14C,8L

The possibility of somehow dividing the county seat in such a way that the Tories might theoretically win both presumed divisions, allied with the heavy overall loss since 1832, meant that Disraeli took Hertford's claims to increased representation seriously.⁴² Although the county was, to some extent, shielded from the growth of metropolitan commuting by the barrier of Middlesex, it was traversed by two major railway lines, the North Western and the Great Northern. St. Albans was connected by a branch line to the major junction at Watford and the west of the county had seen a number of small stations opened, since 1832, along the route of the North Western such as at Berkhamstead, Bushey and Tring.⁴³

⁴¹ The population of St. Albans, c. 7,000 in 1851, was incorporated into the county constituency, as from May 3rd, 1852.

⁴² There are hand-written notes by Disraeli in his papers for the county which, on one level at least, indicates the strength of its claim.

⁴³ The joining of Luton (Bedfordshire) to St. Albans (Hertfordshire) by railway was under construction in 1867-8.

The comparison with other, mainly southern, counties was certainly in Hertfordshire's favour:

	County	Level of Population per every 1 M.P.
1	Cornwall	27,000
2	Devon	29,000
3	Lincolnshire	29,000
4	Kent	35,000
5	Somerset	35,000
6	Staffordshire	39,000
7	Norfolk	40,000
8	Durham Derbyshire	42,000
9	Derbyshire	42,000
10	Hertfordshire ⁴⁴	43,000

The county was unusual in having only one parliamentary borough when c.30% of the entire population could be classified as urban. However, the main unrepresented towns of Hitchin, St. Albans, Tring and Ware were all over the rest of the county and could only be grouped on Scottish or Welsh principles because of the distances involved. The only feasible plan for the boroughs would be to expand Hertford by adding the malting centre of Ware, which was adjacent and also to add Hoddesdon, just three miles away.⁴⁵ In the end, no enfranchisement proposals for Hertfordshire were put forward and Disraeli had to be content with the gain of just one seat achieved by the loss of the second, Liberal, seat in Hertford.

There was no change to the county seat's representation as a consequence of 1867-8. Two Conservatives and one Liberal were returned at every general election from 1857-80 inclusively, with the exception of 1868 when two Liberals were elected. The minority vote clause in 1867 meant that the Tories did not try again to win all three

⁴⁴ The figures for Devon, Lincolnshire and Somerset are as for their proposed divisions in March 1867. Disraeli certainly received excellent advice for the county. His main correspondent wrote:

"...whether exceptional general circumstances do not entitle Herts. to retain within it 5 members, either by forming it into 2 divisions with 2 members each, leaving the county town 1 member, or by leaving the county representation as it is, and giving one of the members for the borough to some other place, or group of towns in the county...The feeling of the inhabitants of Hertford seems to be more dead against its being "grouped" than they could be against its total disfranchisement. Its population (1861) was 6,853...and...most of the boys of Christ's Hospital...about 400, were absent, or the true population would actually have exceeded the 7,000! Our boundaries too are capable of wide extension. Radical Ware indeed is within 2 miles; its population must be 5,000 and it would be a good thing to take it out of the county constituency, though I fear the lingering tradition of ancient and most bitter feuds between Hertford and Ware would render it difficult for all Hertfordians to survive the shock of even a proposal to group their town with Ware, which might well...be grouped with some other unrepresented towns in the county (Hitchin?)". John Dyson, Christ's Hospital, Hertford to Disraeli, March 8th, 1867, H.P., Box 47/1, Ref. B/XI/J/85.

⁴⁵ The populations were: Hoddesdon 2,500 and Ware 5,137.

seats as it was beyond them and the status quo was accepted to such an extent that even in the partisan election of 1880 there was no contest, which was a return to the much more bi-partisan days of 1857-9, when there were also no electoral battles.⁴⁶ The county seat's details were:

Electorate	1859	6,190	Population	1861	166,511
	1865	6,228 ⁴⁷		1871	184,332
	1868	9,423		1881	194,351
	1874	9,809			
	1880	10,050			

Disraeli's knowledge of the county's politics came from his literary friendship with Bulwer – Lytton and his political one with the Marquess of Salisbury.⁴⁸ The county town shared its representation at the three general elections between 1857 – 65. The loss of the second seat in 1867 affected the Liberals with the Tories winning the contests in both 1868 and 1880 and being returned unopposed in 1874. The results were:

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<i>Conservative majority</i>
1868	434	345	89
1880	564	400	164
Totals	998	745	253

⁴⁶ In 1865, the fourth placed Tory was 90 votes behind the first placed, and only, Liberal. The party voting totals in the two contested elections after the Second Reform Acts were:

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Majority</u>
1868	6,752	7,318	L269
1874	8,997	5,938	C1,534
Totals	15,749	13,256	

The majorities given are for the second-placed Liberal over the fourth-placed Tory in 1868 and vice versa for 1874. The return of two Liberals in 1868 was the first time this had happened for the county seat since1832. The small boundary change to Hertford made a mild improvement to the Conservative position in the county constituency.

⁴⁷ Inclusive of 110 non-resident county voters.

⁴⁸ Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, 1803-73; cr. 1st Baron Lytton, 1866; M.P. (Lib.) St. Ives 1831-2, Lincoln 1832-41; (Con.) Hertfordshire 1852-66; Colonial Secretary 1858-9. Lytton owned nearly 5,000 acres in the county at Knebworth. On Lytton, see Leslie Mitchell: "Bulwer Lytton: The Rise and Fall of a Victorian Man of Letters". There are some interesting points about Lytton's relationship with the young Disraeli and why he was appointed Colonial secretary in 1858. The leading landowners in Hertfordshire were, on the Tory side: the Halsey family, which owned 2,100 acres at Hemel Hempstead, J.A.Houblon, 7,100 acres at Bishop's Stortford, the 2nd Marquess of Salisbury, 13,300 acres at Hatfield, just outside Hertford and the 2nd Earl of Verulam, 8,600 acres at St. Albans. For the Liberals, the leading figures were the 1st Viscount Hampden, who owned 6,700 acres at Welwyn and Sir John Sebright, who owned 4,000 acres in the county but who resided at Pershore, Worcestershire.

Neither the increase in the electorate nor the boundary change seem to have harmed Tory prospects. The suburb of Bengeo, consisting of 132 houses, both villa and artisan, with a population of c.660, was added by the Boundary Commission.⁴⁹ The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	530	Population	1861	6,605
	1865	543		1871	6,769
	1868	922		1881	7,894
	1874	1,041			
	1880	1,081			

In conclusion, the Tories gained one seat in Hertfordshire in 1867-8 due to Liberal disfranchisement.

Huntingdonshire

The county had four M.P.s up to 1868 with the borough of Huntingdon then losing its second M.P., as part of Disraeli’s original proposals. This cost the Conservatives one Member. There were no boundary changes or redistribution issues involved. As with Cambridgeshire, there was no correspondence to Disraeli concerning its politics. The General Election results for 1859-80 were:

	<u>1859</u>	<u>1865</u>	<u>1868</u>	<u>1874</u>	<u>1880</u>	<i>Sub-totals</i>
<u>County</u>	2C	2C*	2C*	2C	1C,1L	9C,1L
<u>Borough</u>	2C*	2C*	1C*	1C*	1C*	7C
Totals	4C	4C	3C	3C	2C,1L	16C,1L

Huntingdonshire was the second smallest county in England at just under 240,000 acres and the size of both the electorate and population reflected this. The county constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	3,024	Population	1861	64,250
	1865	2,999		1871	55,167
	1868	3,748		1881	50,804
	1874	3,592			
	1880	3,955			

⁴⁹ The Conservative M.P. for the constituency from 1866-74 was Robert Dimsdale, 1828-98. Tory landlord influence in the town came from the Marquess of Salisbury at Hatfield. For the Liberals, the leading family was the 7th Earl Cowper, who owned 10,000 acres outside Hertford.

Agricultural decline, past rural radicalism and present nonconformity made the Liberal cause increasingly potent after 1868. Fenland smallholders and the few, unrepresented towns such as Ramsey and St. Neots gave support to the party. The Tories relied on the overwhelmingly agricultural nature of the seat and the influence of the main landed proprietors. The county election results, including one contested by-election, were:

	<u>Conservative</u> ⁵⁰	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Majority</u>
1859	1,314	1,068	C246
1874	1,482	1,192	C290
1877	1,468 ⁵¹	1,410	C58
1880	1,596	1,617	L21
Totals	5,860	5,287	

The Conservative M.P.s in the 1865 Parliament were Edward Fellowes and Robert Montagu.⁵²

The borough of Huntingdon, the birthplace of Oliver Cromwell, was a quintessential Tory pocket borough, returning two M.P.s for the party from 1832-67 and one, thereafter, from 1868-85 without a single contest at any general election after 1832. Fortunately, there were two by-elections after 1868, which gave some sense of the borough’s electoral politics. The 1884 contest was rather remarkably close:

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Conservative majority</u>
<u>December 1873</u>	499	341	158
<u>March 1884</u>	455	446	9
Totals	954	787	

⁵⁰ As the Liberals only ever ran one candidate, the Conservative figure given is for second place, except in 1877. The vote for the first-placed Tory was:

1859	1,404
1874	1,648
1880	1,786

Polling in the north of the county was at Stilton, in the south at Huntingdon itself.
⁵¹ Derby commented on the 1877 by-election as follows:
 "...News that the Huntingdonshire election is saved, which was hardly thought probable..."
 Diary, op. cit., July 1st, 1877.
⁵² Edward Fellowes, cr. 1st Lord de Ramsay, 1887; M.P. (Con.) Huntingdonshire 1837-80; brother of Richard Benyon, M.P. (Con.) Berkshire; owned 15,000 acres at Ramsey Abbey, Huntingdon.
 Lord Robert Montagu, 1825-1902; 2nd s. of the 6th Duke of Manchester; M.P. (Con.) Huntingdonshire 1859-74, (Irish Nationalist) Westmeath 1874-80; Vice-President of the Council (Education), March 1867-December 1868; Roman Catholic 1870-82.
 The leading landowners with noted political influence were the 4th Earl of Carysfort, Liberal, who owned 4,000 acres in the county and on the Tory side, the 7th Duke of Manchester, 13,400 acres at Kimbolton and the 7th Earl of Sandwich, 3,200 acres at Huntingdon.

The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	378	Population	1861	6,254
	1865	383		1871	6,606
	1868	976		1881	6,416
	1874	1,049			
	1880	1,052 ⁵³			

The Tory M.P.s during the 1865-8 Parliament were Baring and Peel with one of Disraeli's lawyers representing the constituency later on.⁵⁴

Norfolk

Norfolk was a large, agricultural, Tory county but one with a tradition of rural radicalism in the East, supported by the manufacturing centre of Norwich. The Eastern Division, in particular, required dividing on grounds of population, especially given the disfranchisement of Great Yarmouth. In an ideal world, Disraeli would have divided the county into four. The total county population almost justified this. It was also a consideration that Suffolk was not to have increased county representation, even though its 1861 population totalled 273,000. However, such Tory favouritism would have led to further Radical objections over the niggardly treatment of the large towns.

The 1832 Eastern Division was not quite split into two in 1868. Some important additions came to both the new Northern and Southern seats from the Conservative stronghold of the West.⁵⁵ There was little Liberal resistance and no alternative plan submitted. This was probably to do with the fact that the Conservatives gained no tangible reward from their Norfolk settlement. The expected benefit from the two additional county seats was rendered nugatory by the loss of Great Yarmouth,

⁵³ In 1884, the electorate had jumped to 3,658.

⁵⁴ Thomas Baring, 1799-1873; M.P. (Con.) Huntingdon 1844-73; for Baring, see Vincent, "Stanley Journals", op. cit., p. 350, f.n. 34 (for the year 1849).

General Jonathan Peel, 1799-1879; M.P. (Con.) Huntingdon 1826-30, 1831-2, 1832-68; War Secretary 1858-9 and 1866-7; for Peel, see *ibid.* p. 370, f.n. 19 (for the year 1863). Peel's second spell as War Secretary is mis-dated.

Sir John Burgess Karlake, 1821-81; M.P. (Con.) Andover 1867-8, Huntingdon 1874-6; defeated Exeter 1868; Solicitor-General 1866, Attorney-General 1867-8 and 1874-5.

⁵⁵ The 1867 Boundary Commission map refers to the Northern Norfolk as the North-East Division and Southern Norfolk as the South-East Division. Following representations, the word "East" was dropped in the 1868 Boundary Act.

disfranchised in 1865.⁵⁶ As the town straddled the Norfolk – Suffolk border, 30,338 of the population went into the new North Norfolk constituency, whilst the remaining 4,472 joined East Suffolk. The disfranchisement of both Great Yarmouth and Thetford meant that the county lost half its remaining seats. Stanley's position as one of the two M.P.s for King's Lynn inconvenienced his father but it also gave him a natural base from which he could lead the reforming, urban wing of the Conservative Party in the debates of 1866 – 8. Bentinck's absence from the 1865 Parliament both had the advantage of lessening the anti – Disraeli "Cave" but it also contributed to the lack of attention to the county's affairs, which were not strongly represented.⁵⁷ Clare Sewell Read moved seats too often to inspire much confidence as election manager.

The Norfolk General Election results from 1859 – 80 were as follows:

	<u>County Seats</u>	<u>1859</u>	<u>1865</u>	<u>1868</u>	<u>1874</u>	<u>1880</u>	<u>Sub-total</u>
1	<u>Eastern</u>	1C,1L*	2C	N/a	N/a	N/a	3C,1L
2	<u>North</u>	N/a	N/a	2C	2C*	2C*	6C
3	<u>South</u>	N/a	N/a	2C	2C	1C,1L	5C,1L
4	<u>Western</u>	1C,1L*	2C	2C*	2C*	2C	9C,1L
	<u>Sub-total</u>	2C,2L	4C	6C	6C	5C,1L	23C,3L
	<u>Borough Seats</u> ⁵⁸						
1	<u>Great Yarmouth</u>	2C	2C	N/a	N/a	N/a	4C
2	<u>King's Lynn</u>	1C,1L*	1C,1L	2C	2C	1C,1L	7C,3L
3	<u>Norwich</u>	2L	2L	2L ⁵⁹	1C,1L	2L	1C,9L
4	<u>Thetford</u>	2L*	1C,1L	N/a	N/a	N/a	1C,3L
	<u>Sub-total</u>	3C,5L	4C,4L	2C,2L	3C,1L	1C,3L	13C,15L
	Totals	5C,7L	8C,4L	8C,2L	9C,1L	6C,4L	36C,18L

Between 1832 – 67 Norfolk had four county and eight borough seats; between 1868 – 85 it had six county and four borough ones: an overall reduction of two, from twelve to ten. The Conservatives gained two M.P.s in the county but lost the same number in Great Yarmouth. Both parties lost one apiece in Thetford.

⁵⁶ Corruption in the town appeared to be endemic. The freemen had been disfranchised in 1848 and the rest of the electorate followed seventeen years later. The disfranchisement took effect at the end of the 1865 Parliament.

⁵⁷ Neither the Hughenden Papers nor Stanley's Journal has much to offer on Norfolk, though Stanley wrote a magnificent account of matters in King's Lynn, which is quoted later.

⁵⁸ All four were double Member constituencies.

⁵⁹ The Norwich result is for the July 1870 by-election, not the 1868 General Election, where the Tories won one seat but the result was declared void.

The geographical distribution of the county’s borough seats and the reasons for their loss were:

1	<u>Great Yarmouth</u>	Eastern Division 1832-68	Lost both seats due to corruption
2	<u>King’s Lynn</u>	Western Division 1832-85	
3	<u>Norwich</u>	Eastern Division 1832-68; Southern Division 1868-85	
4	<u>Thetford</u>	Western Division 1832-68	Lost one seat in 1867, the other in 1868

County Seats

Disraeli and Lambert almost perfected the redistribution but they made a slight error, from the Tory point of view, over the balance of the new North and South seats. In effect, they put too many Conservative votes in the North and West and just too few in the South Division. In mitigation, any other division than the one actually made would have looked odd, the position of Great Yarmouth complicated matters and the populations of the new Divisions were almost identical at c.113, 000 each. The following table showing the party majorities between the winning second, and losing third – placed candidates at all the contested elections between 1859 – 80, indicated the slight miscalculation made.⁶⁰ In his defence, Disraeli was not entirely clairvoyant and could not be expected to appreciate that the South seat would swing strongly towards the rural radicalism of the late 1870s, whilst the rest of the county stayed immune:

	<u>1865</u>	<u>1868</u>	<u>1871</u>	<u>1874</u>	<u>1876</u>	<u>1879</u>	<u>1880</u>
East	C835						
North		C328			C110	C490	
South		C1,374	C321	C311			<i>LI</i>
West	C478						C129 ⁶¹

⁶⁰ There is just a hint of this in one of the few extant letters:
“Now if the Bill becomes law there will be no Eastern division of the county of Norfolk, but the district in which Yarmouth is situated will be North East Norfolk, as Yarmouth is in the hundred of East Flegg”. Clare Sewell Read to Corry, July 19th, 1867, H.P., Box 47/2, Ref. B/X1/J/169.
⁶¹ If the aggregate majorities are taken just for the contested general election results only, and the three by-election results of the 1870s are excluded, the following picture emerges:

	<u>Conservative aggregate majority</u>	<u>Number of county constituencies</u>	<u>Average majority</u>
1859-67	1,313	2	657
1868-80	2,141	3	714

The original 1832 separation of the county was as follows, with the new Divisions from 1868 onwards, in brackets:

	Eastern Division	Western Division ⁶²
1	Blofield (S)	Brothercross
2	Clavering (S)	Clackclose
3	Deepwade (S)	Freebridge Lynn
4	Diss (S)	Freebridge Marshland
5	Earlsham (S)	Gallow
6	Erpingham, North (N)	Giltcross (S)
7	Erpingham, South (N)	Greenhoe, North (N)
8	Eynesford (N)	Greenhoe, South
9	Flegg, East (N)	Grimshoe
10	Flegg, West (N)	Holt (N)
11	Farehoe (S)	Launditch
12	Happing (N)	Mitford (S)
13	Henstead (S)	Shropham (S)
14	Humbleyard (S)	Smithdon
15	Loddon (S)	Wayland
16	Taverham (S)	
17	Tunstead (N)	
18	Walsham (S)	

The old Eastern Division disappeared in 1867.⁶³ The big Tory victory in 1865 made a successful re – drawing of the boundaries crucially important in order that votes would not be wasted.⁶⁴ This result was rather at odds with the unopposed, double, Liberal triumph in 1857, the party’s contested by-election victory a year later and the agreement to share matters in 1859.

⁶² Apart from where it is indicated, the Western Division stayed largely as it was. For the proposed Divisions, see Lambert’s notes to Disraeli, July 5th, 1867, H.P., Box 48/2, Ref. B/XI/L/10.

⁶³ The election centre was Norwich, with the other polling centres being Great Yarmouth in the east, Long Stratton in the south, North Walsham in the north and Reepham in the west.

⁶⁴ Kimberley wrote of the old seat:

“...it is too illiberal a constituency...” June 12th, 1865, from: “The Journal of John Wodehouse, First Earl of Kimberley, for 1862-1902”, editors, A. Hawkins and J.Powell. Kimberley, created Earl in 1866, owned 10,800 acres at Wymondham. The leading Tory landowners were the 2nd Marquess of Cholmondeley, 1792-1870, joint hereditary Great Chamberlain, who owned 17,000 acres at Houghton Hall, Rougham and the 4th Earl of Orford, who owned 12,300 acres at Aylsham. Both Tories were transferred into the new, North Division, Kimberley into the South.

The details before division were:

Electorate	1859	7,776	Population	1861	148,798 ⁶⁵
	1865	7,939			
	1867	8,092			

The new, North Norfolk seat was largely the northern half of the old, Eastern Division with the important additions of Holt and North Greenhoe from the Western constituency. The details were:

Electorate	1868	6,432	Population	1861	112,852 ⁶⁶
	1874	6,325		1871	114,795
	1880	6,519		1881	116,919

There were contests for the 1868 General Election and for two subsequent by-elections. The results were:

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Conservative Majority</u>
1868 ⁶⁷	5,193	4,313	328
April 1876	2,302	2,192	110
January 1879	2,742	2,252	490
Totals	10,237	8,757	

The new, South Norfolk seat was largely the southern half of the old, Eastern Division, with the important additions of Giltcross, Mitford and Shropham from the Western constituency.⁶⁸ The details were:

Electorate	1868	7,709	Population	1861	113,600
	1874	7,667		1871	113,844
	1880	7,412		1881	113,002

⁶⁵ Excluding Great Yarmouth.

Clare Sewell Read, 1826-1905; M.P. (Con.) East Norfolk 1865-8, South Norfolk 1868-80, West Norfolk 1884-5; defeated Norwich 1886; secretary, Local Government Board 1874-6; moved resolution for elected county boards, March 1877; vice-chairman, East Norfolk Anti-Malt Tax Society; author on farming.

⁶⁶ All three population figures are inclusive of most of Great Yarmouth. The election centre for the new seat was Aylsham.

⁶⁷ The 1868 totals are aggregates for both parties. The majority is for the winning, second-placed Tory over the losing, third-placed Liberal. Kimberley's relative and secretary, E.R.Wodehouse, was this candidate and the diarist commented:

"Yarmouth caused our defeat. Apart from Yarmouth Wodehouse was one ahead of Walpole [the first-placed Conservative]. It is not a little disgraceful that a notorious briber, such as Lacon [the second-placed one], should be one of the members for this county. But the "dog returns to its vomit" is eminently true of Yarmouth". Wodehouse Journal, op. cit., November 25th, 1868. The voting figures given by Kimberley are slightly at variance with those of Craig and McCalmont.

⁶⁸ The new election centre was Norwich.

At all three General Elections from 1868–80 there were contests with the Liberals running just a single candidate. There was, also, a by-election in 1871. The results were:

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Majority</u>
1868	3,075	1,679	C1,396
April, 1871	2,868	2,547	C321
1874	3,078	2,699	C379
1880	2,911	2,905	L1
Totals⁶⁹	11,932	9,830	

West Norfolk returned two Tories from 1865-80 inclusively. The loss, in 1867, of five of its original sixteen hundreds from 1832, did not help the Tory position, though it remained strong enough to just return both M.P.s in 1880.⁷⁰ The results of the only two contests held were:

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Conservative majority</u>
1865	5,321	4,221	478
1880	2,233	2,104	129
Totals⁷¹	5,113	4,215	

The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	6,941	Population	1861	161,218
	1865	6,534		1871	112,365 ⁷²
	1868	7,062		1881	108,532
	1874	6,647			
	1880	6,471			

⁶⁹ The Conservative vote is the average for the two candidates, whilst the majority is for the winning, second-placed M.P. over the losing, third-placed candidate, with both exceptions for 1871.

⁷⁰ Joseph Arch was elected as M.P. for Norfolk, North-West on the seat's division in 1885. The election centre was Swaffham from 1832-85. Until 1867 the other polling centres were Downham in the west, Fakenham in the north, King's Lynn in the north-west and Thetford in the south.

⁷¹ As both parties ran two candidates in 1865 the totals are the aggregate votes, whilst the majority is for the winning, second-placed candidate over the losing, third-placed one. In 1880 the Liberals only had one candidate.

⁷² The 1871 and 1881 figures include Thetford, disfranchised in 1868. Its 1861 population of 4,208 divided two-thirds to West Norfolk and one-third to West Suffolk.

The Tory M.P.s during the 1865 Parliament were Bagge and de Grey, with G.W.P.Bentinck fortunately absent for Disraeli.⁷³

Borough Seats

Of the original four represented boroughs from 1832, only two remained by the end of 1868. Great Yarmouth's details were:

Electorate	1865	1,645	Population	1861	34,810
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Two Conservatives had been returned in 1859-65, the voting being:

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Conservative majority</u>
1859	1,358	1,104	91
1865	1,612	1,223	150
Totals⁷⁴	2,970	2,327	

The M.P.s in the 1865 Parliament were J. Goodson and Kimberley's friend, Lacon.⁷⁵
King's Lynn's details were:

Electorate	1859	1,019	Population	1861	16,170
	1865	852		1871	19,266
	1868	2,514		1881	18,454
	1874	2,450			
	1880	2,779			

The parties had shared the representation from 1857-65 inclusively, apart from 1865 without a contest taking place. In that year the Tories tried, and failed, to gain the second seat, the Liberals winning it by 401 – 339. The big increase in the electorate did little harm to the Tory cause: the party returned both M.P.s in 1868-74, shared

⁷³ Sir William Bagge, 1810-80; M.P. (Con.) West Norfolk 1837-57 and 1865-80; defeated 1835; baronet 1867; Protectionist and supporter of malt tax repeal; owned 3,800 acres at Downham Market.

George William Pierrepont Bentinck, 1803-86; M.P. (Con.) West Norfolk 1852-65 and 1871-84; stood down in 1865 due to "ill health"; defeated Kendal 1843; referred to Disraeli as "the Jew"; opposed him over reductions in expenditure and the income tax, 1857; leader of anti-Disraeli plot, 1860; nicknamed "Big Ben"; owned just under 3,000 acres at Terrington, near King's Lynn.

Thomas de Grey, succ. as 6th Baron Walsingham, 1871; b. 1843; M.P. (Con.) West Norfolk 1865-71; family owned 12,000 acres at Thetford.

The Liberal landlords were Baron Hastings who owned just under 13,000 acres at Dereham, the 2nd Earl of Leicester, 44,000 acres at Holkham and the 5th Marquess of Townshend, 18,000 acres at Fakenham.

⁷⁴ The totals are the aggregates for both parties running two candidates, 1859-65. The majority is for the winning, second-placed candidate over the losing, third-placed one.

⁷⁵ James Goodson, barrister; M.P. (Con.) Great Yarmouth 1865-8; chairman, Great Eastern Railway. Sir Edmund Henry Knowles Lacon, b. 1807; M.P. (Con.) Great Yarmouth 1852-7 and 1859-68; North Norfolk 1868-85; brewer and banker.

matters in 1880 and won the December 1869 by-election when Stanley became the 15th Earl of Derby. The voting was as follows:

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Majority</u>
1868	1,125	1,012	C113
December 1869	1,051	1,032	C19
1874	2,256	1,894	C94
1880	2,449	2,437	L94
Totals⁷⁶	6,881	6,375	

There was only a small boundary change involving the suburb of Highgate to the north of the old town, which saw c.140 houses, largely the abodes of railway workers, added to the constituency. As some of the properties would have qualified for the £12 occupation franchise in West Norfolk, the Liberal position was compromised. However, as the Tory victory margin in 1880 was 129, the conclusion was, just, no change from the King's Lynn/West Norfolk redistribution.⁷⁷ Stanley was the only Conservative for the borough in the 1865 Parliament.⁷⁸ Political influence was exercised in the Tory interest for the borough by the Duke of Portland and the Earl of Orford.⁷⁹

The county capital was the Liberal stronghold in Norfolk. The only, legitimate, Tory success between 1854 – 85 was the gaining of one seat, held for a year, in 1874.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ The majorities are for second over third in 1868-74 and for first over third in 1880.

⁷⁷ There is a detailed description of the town's politics in 1856-7 in Stanley's Journals, op. cit., pp. 145-6.

⁷⁸ Edward Henry, Lord Stanley, succ. as 15th Earl of Derby, 1869; M.P. (Con.) King's Lynn 1848-69; Foreign Secretary, as Conservative, 1866-8 and 1874-8, Colonial Secretary, as Liberal, 1882-5.

⁷⁹ The 5th Duke of Portland, 1800-79, owned just 591 acres in Norfolk but this included much property in King's Lynn itself. For Orford's holdings in the county, see under East Norfolk.

⁸⁰ The Tory victor was John Walter Huddleston, 1815-90; M.P. (Con.) Canterbury 1865-8, Norwich 1874-5; defeated Worcester 1852, Shrewsbury 1857, Kidderminster 1859, Canterbury 1868 and Norwich 1870 (by-election voided); appointed judge of the Court of Common Pleas, 1875.

The relevant contests were:⁸¹

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Majority</u>
March 1860	3,267	4,128	L409
1865	2,829	3,683	L372
February 1871	3,389	4,637	L1,248
1874	11,113	11,914	C47
March 1875	5,079	5,877	L798
1880	10,274	13,061	L1,270
Totals	35,951	43,300	

There were no boundary changes.⁸² The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	5,058	Population	1861	74,891
	1865	4,817 ⁸³		1871	80,386
	1868	13,296		1881	87,843
	1874	15,166			
	1880	15,349			

The Conservatives appeared to have had real difficulties in getting candidates to stand for Norwich. Apart from the jobbing lawyer, Huddleston, between 1865 – 80 at the seven contests which took place, eight different candidates stood with only two standing more than once.⁸⁴ Fortunately, one of the possibilities approached was none other than Dudley Baxter for the 1870 by – election. He had been written to by Sir Samuel Bignold, the leading local Tory. Baxter was concerned about the number of public houses, which was c.700, or one for each 100 inhabitants or every twenty – five males. Rather sadly, Baxter declined the opportunity to stand.⁸⁵ The Liberals, by contrast, had no such problems. The railway had reached Norwich in 1849. This

⁸¹ The General Election of 1859, the return of the Conservative at the 1868 General Election and the by-elections of June 1859 and July 1870 were all declared void. With the exception of the two by-elections (the March 1860 contest was the re-run of the two voided 1859 contests); the majorities are for the winning, second-placed candidate over the losing, third-placed one.

⁸² One of the Cabinet rebels of 1867 explained matters as follows:

“Take the case of Norwich, with which I was personally acquainted. The side that obtained the majority of votes at the municipal election could feel secure when the parliamentary election came on”. General J. Peel, Parl. Deb., 3, vol. 187, col. 286 (6th May-17th June 1867).

⁸³ As a county in itself, the borough freeholders voted in Norwich not for South Norfolk.

⁸⁴ Huddleston and Sir H.J.Stracey in 1868 and 1874.

⁸⁵ He wrote by way of explanation to Disraeli:

“...the great majority of these [public houses] are Tories. On my showing him [Bignold] my temperance speeches, he was evidently alarmed and from [a] conference with their leading brewer, I learned we might possibly lose 300 votes if our opponent placarded me as a pronounced temperance man”. R.D.Baxter to Disraeli, July 5th, 1870, H.P., Box 117/3, Ref. B/XII/B/188.

allowed Colman to get his mustard to market in London, enabling him to become the largest employer and in due course M.P. for a generation.⁸⁶

Thetford lost one seat in 1867, the Liberal one, under Disraeli's original plans and the other in 1868, the Conservative one, in order to make way for Scotland. The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	231	Population	1861	4,208
	1865	224			

Due to the resignation of the Liberal A.H. Baring in 1867, the Tories held both seats for the last year of Thetford's existence when the party won the uncontested by-election.⁸⁷ The Tory M.P.s in the 1865 Parliament were E.S.Gordon and R.J.H.Harvey.⁸⁸ Political influence in the borough was exercised by the Duke of Grafton.⁸⁹ There were no proposed boundary changes.

The overall effect of the political settlement in Norfolk in 1867-8, therefore, was no change.

Suffolk

The county was remarkable for the absence of change in 1867 – 8. Disraeli would dearly have liked to have created a new, mid – division. However, the population figures did not quite justify it:

	1861	1871
<u>Eastern Division</u>	146,833	157,208
<u>Western Division</u>	126,634	127,065
Totals	273,467⁹⁰	284,273

The expanding east of the county, due to the growth in the trade of the ports was at odds with the somnambulance of the profoundly agricultural west. The case for an

⁸⁶ Jeremiah James Colman; M.P. (Lib.) Norwich 1871-95. The other major Liberal family with influence in the city was Gurney: John Gurney owned 2,500 acres at Sprowston Hall and John Henry Gurney, Liberal M.P. for King's Lynn, 1854-65, 8,500 acres at Keswick Hall, both at Norwich.
⁸⁷ Representation had been shared at every general election from 1832-65 inclusively, without a contest except for 1841 and 1865, with the Liberals returning both Members in 1859.
⁸⁸ For Gordon, see the entry for the university seats.
Sir Robert John Harvey Harvey, knighted 1868; 1816-70; M.P. (Con.) Thetford 1865-8. Hardy was rather scathing about Harvey's honour, see Diary, op. cit., Wednesday, November 25th, 1868.
⁸⁹ William Henry Fitzroy, 6th Duke of Grafton, succ. 1863; M.P. (Lib.) Thetford 1847-63; diplomatic attaché, Naples; owned 11,000 acres at Euston Hall, Thetford.
⁹⁰ Lambert's notes to Disraeli, July 5th, 1867, H.P., Box 48/2, Ref. B/XI/L/10.

increase in the representation was put in a memorial from “the Nobles, Gentlemen and Landowners of Suffolk”. They argued that:

Of 52 counties in England and Wales, excluding boroughs, Suffolk had:	1 M.P. per 68,367 population.
The mean average of the 52 counties, excluding boroughs, was:	1 M.P. per c.59,000 population.
In Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk, excluding boroughs, the mean average was:	1 M.P. per 79,139 population. ⁹¹

They claimed, and not illegitimately, that Suffolk was the most important county in England not to receive increased representation, a situation made worse by the earlier, uncompensated, loss of Sudbury for corruption.⁹² The only other possibility was the enfranchisement of radical Lowestoft. By 1867 its population was 16,261 and the East Anglian ports, as a political interest, were under – represented following Great Yarmouth’s demise.⁹³ The most coherent plan came from F.S.Corrance, who proposed grouping the Suffolk ports and small towns in his constituency:

	Unrepresented Towns	Population	Represented Towns	Population
1	Aldborough	1,500	Eye	4,500
2	Beccles	4,266	Ipswich	37,950
3	Bungay	3,805		
4	Framlingham	2,500		
5	Hadleigh	2,779		
6	Halesworth	2,382		
7	Lowestoft	10,662		
8	Needham Market	2,000		
9	Saxmundham	Not known		
10	Southwold	2,032		
11	Woodbridge	4,513		
	Total	36,439⁹⁴		

⁹¹ In relation to English counties only, Suffolk was 14th in rateable value, 15th in terms of income and 16th in terms of population.

⁹² The memorial finished:

“That Suffolk is not only a great agricultural but a considerable maritime and manufacturing county”. It was signed by, amongst others, Bristol, E.S.Gooch, Hervey, Howe, Edward Kerrison, Rendlesham and Tollemache. H.P., Box 48/1, July 1867, Ref. B/XI/K/20.

⁹³ The 1861 Census figure was 10,663.

⁹⁴ For Corrance, see East Suffolk; for the plan, see Parl. Deb., 3, vol. 187, cols. 1170-3, (6th May-17th June, 1867). Support for the proposal came from Harvey, Tory M.P. for Thetford, who wrote:

“Again I see Lowestoft where I am staying...is a place decidedly radical in its feelings and yet, of course, it may seriously affect the County representation of Suffolk if left as it is, Southwold...being also now a part of the County representation”. R.J.H.Harvey to Disraeli, June 9th, 1867, H.P., Box 47/2, Ref. B/XI/J/160.

However, it did not happen. The General Election results for Suffolk from 1859 – 65 were:

	<u>County Divisions</u>	<u>1859</u>	<u>1865</u>	<u>1868</u>	<u>1874</u>	<u>1880</u>	<i>Sub-total</i>
1	Eastern	2C	2C*	2C	2C	2C	10C
2	Western	2C	2C*	2C	2C*	2C*	10C
	<i>Sub-total</i>	4C	4C	4C	4C	4C	20C
	<u>Boroughs</u> ⁹⁵						
1	Bury St. Edmunds (W)	1C,1L	2L	1C,.1L	2C	1C,1L	5C,5L
2	Eye (W)	1C*	1C*	1C*	1C*	1C	5C
3	Ipswich (E)	1C,1L	1C,1L	2L	2C	1C,1L	5C,5L
	<i>Sub-total</i>	3C,2L	2C,3L	2C,3L	5C	3C,2L	15C,10L
	Totals	7C,2L	6C,3L	6C,3L	9C	7C,2L	35C,10L

County Seats

The Second Reform Acts rather re-awakened political interest in the great Eastern Division.⁹⁶ There was only one contest from 1843 – 65, in 1859, but from 1867 – 80 there were six, not that it made much difference as two Conservatives were returned for the constituency at the twelve Victorian general elections held from 1832 – 80 inclusively. The voting was as follows:

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Conservative majority</u>
February 1867	2,489	2,120	C369
1868	7,270	6,366	C299
June 1870	3,456	3,285	C171
1874	3,896	3,014	C882
February 1876	3,659	2,708	C951
1880	3,618	3,504	C114
Totals ⁹⁷	24,388	20,997	

The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	5,837	Population	1861	146,833
	1865	6,769		1871	157,208
	1868	9,024		1881	162,099
	1874	9,527			
	1880	9,635			

⁹⁵ Bury St. Edmunds and Eye were in the Western Division and Ipswich in the Eastern Division.

⁹⁶ The election capital was Ipswich and the other post-1832 polling centres were Beccles and Halesworth in the north, Framlingham and Saxmundham in the centre and Woodbridge in the south of the Division.

⁹⁷ Only in 1868 did both parties run two candidates each. The majority is for the winning, second-placed candidate over the losing, third-placed one. In 1874-80 the first-placed Tory, Lord Rendlesham, seemed to enjoy a strong personal vote, polling well ahead of his (different) colleague. He polled 4,136 votes in 1874 and 4,239 in 1880.

Rather oddly for a county seat, there were eight separate Tory M.P.s for the Division from 1859 – 85 and, due to a peculiar combination of circumstances, there were five during the 1865 – 8 Parliament alone.⁹⁸

The inland Western Division returned two Tories from 1837-85, with contests held only in 1868 and 1875.⁹⁹ The results reflected this predominance:

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Conservative majority</u>
1868	2,389 ¹⁰⁰	1,705	684
1875	2,780	1,061	1,719
Totals	5,169	2,766	

Derby wrote:

“...We had the seat before, and never expected to lose it: but much had been said about the discontent of the farmers: the Liberals were sanguine of at least cutting the majority down to a small figure: and instead of that, it is greater than ever”.¹⁰¹ The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	4,172	Population	1861	126,634
	1865	4,269		1871	127,065
	1868	5,583		1881	121,844
	1874	5,772			
	1880	5,700			

The Conservative M.P.s for the 1865 Parliament were Lord Augustus Hervey and W. Parker. The influential, Tory, landowner was the Marquis of Bristol.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ They were Lord Henniker and Sir Fitzroy Kelly from 1865-6, the former's son J.M.H. Major 1866-70, Sir E.C. Kerrison 1866-7 and F.S. Corrance, 1867-74. Corrance and Kerrison played the main roles in the political debates over Suffolk's representation during the Reform Parliament. Frederick Snowdon Corrance, 1822-1906; M.P. (Con.) East Suffolk 1867-74; campaigned for abolition of the income tax, resided at Framlingham.
Sir Edward Clarence Kerrison, 1821-86; M.P. (Con.) Eye 1852-66, East Suffolk 1866-7, owned 10,000 acres in the county.
The other big Tory landowners in the Division were the 12th Duke of Hamilton, who owned 5,000 acres at Easton Park and the 2nd Earl of Stradbroke, 12,000 acres at Wangford.
⁹⁹ The election centre was Bury St. Edmunds with county voting also at Ixworth in the north, Lavenham in the south, Mildenhall in the north-west, Stowmarket in the east and Wickhambrook in the south-west.
¹⁰⁰ The figure is for the second-placed, winning Tory.
¹⁰¹ Derby Diaries, op. cit., June 16th, 1875.
¹⁰² Lord Augustus Henry Charles Hervey, M.P. (Con.) West Suffolk 1864-75.
Windsor Parker, M.P. (Con.) West Suffolk 1859-80.
Frederic William Hervey, 3rd Marquis of Bristol, M.P. (Con.) West Suffolk 1859-64 as Earl Jermyn; owned 17,000 acres at Ickworth Park, Bury St. Edmunds.

The Borough Seats

Disraeli lacked any specific or particular knowledge about the borough seats in Suffolk. There were no boundary changes to the three remaining constituencies, Sudbury already having been removed. Ipswich was the only borough in the Eastern Division. The parties shared the representation, though contested, from 1847-68, with the Tory M.P. throughout that period being the local banker and railway director, J.C.Cobbold.¹⁰³ The Liberals won both seats in 1868, the Tories likewise in 1874, before matters were again divided in 1880. The highly marginal nature of the constituency was further highlighted by the Tory by – election victory in 1876, with the Liberals doing likewise in 1883. This latter result was a Liberal gain giving the party both M.P.s until 1885.¹⁰⁴

Ipswich's details were:

Electorate	1859	1,914	Population	1861	37,950
	1865	2,118		1871	42,947
	1868	5,352		1881	50,546
	1874	7,307			
	1880	7,406			

In the Western Division, the capital of Bury St. Edmunds was highly marginal. Representation was shared in 1857 – 9, 1868 and 1880. The Liberals won both seats in 1865, the Tories likewise in 1874. The Liberal interest was headed by the Duke of Grafton, the Tory one by the Marquis of Bristol. The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	695	Population	1861	13,318
	1865	676		1871	14,928
	1868	1,505		1881	16,111
	1874	1,919			
	1880	2,123			

Eye, in the far north – east of the Division, was a close borough under the patronage of the Kerrison family. When E.C. Kerrison resigned to go to East Suffolk in 1866, Barrington, Derby's secretary, took his place.¹⁰⁵ There were no contests between 1832

¹⁰³ John Chevalier Cobbold, M.P. (Con.), Ipswich 1847-68, when defeated.

¹⁰⁴ The results were: January 1st 1876, Con. 2,213, Lib./Lab. 1,607, Con. majority 606; December 14th 1883, Lib. 3,266, Con. 2,816, Lib. majority 450.

¹⁰⁵ Sir Edward Clarence Kerrison, 1821-86, M.P. (Con.) Eye 1852-66, East Suffolk 1866-7; owned 10,000 acres in Suffolk and 2,000 in Norfolk.

and March 1874. The increase in the electorate in 1867 and the introduction of the secret ballot in 1872 allowed for three contests, two of which were by-elections. The relevant results were:

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Conservative majority</u>
March 1874	656	386	270
1880	540	478	62
July 1885	473	336	137
Totals	1,669	1,200	

The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	342	Population	1861	7,038
	1865	339		1871	6,721
	1868	1,198		1881	6,293
	1874	1,163			
	1880	1,082			

Lastly, Sudbury had been disfranchised and incorporated into the county, as from July 1844.¹⁰⁶ In conclusion, there was no change in Suffolk in 1867-8.

The overall situation in East Anglia was as follows:

	<u>County</u>	<u>County seats</u>	<u>Borough seats</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Sub-total</u>
1)	Bedfordshire	No change	No change	N/a	N/a
2)	Cambridgeshire	No change	No change	N/a	N/a
3)	Essex	Con. +2	Con.-2	a)	N/a
4)	Hertfordshire	No change	Lib.-1	b)	-1L
5)	Huntingdonshire	No change	Con.-1	c)	-1C
6)	Norfolk	Con.+2	Con.-3, Lib.-1	d)	N/a
7)	Suffolk	No change	No change	N/a	N/a

- a) Essex: New county division +2C; loss of second borough seats in both Harwich and Maldon -2C.
- b) Hertfordshire: Loss of second borough seat in Hertford -1L.
- c) Huntingdonshire: Loss of second borough seat in Huntingdon -1C.
- d) Norfolk: New county division +2C; disfranchisement of both Great Yarmouth and Thetford -3C, -1L (Con. -2 in Great Yarmouth, -1 in Thetford; Lib -1 in Thetford).

The conclusion was no change.

George William Barrington, 7th Viscount (Irish) 1867, 1st Baron Shute 1880; 1824-86; M.P. (Con.) Eye 1866-80; vice-chamberlain 1874-80.

¹⁰⁶ The 1851 population was 6,043 and the 1841 electorate 603.

CHAPTER 9: LONDON AND THE SOUTH EAST.

Berkshire

Berkshire, in one sense, followed the traditional pattern of Tory county and Liberal boroughs but, it varied in another, by not following the metropolitan counties in moving to the right as a consequence of 1867-8. Its M.P.s were:

	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>1832-67</u>	<u>1868-85</u>
	<i>County</i>	3	3
	<i>Boroughs</i>		
1	Reading	2	2
2	Windsor	2	1
3	Abingdon	1	1
4	Wallingford	1	1
	<i>Sub-total</i>	6	5
	Totals	9	8

The Conservative inclined county was balanced by the Liberal stronghold of Reading. The other, small boroughs were more equally divided. Berkshire was one of the tripartite counties from the 1832 “settlement” and it was included in the minority vote clause from 1867 onwards. This allowed the Liberals, in effect John Walter and “The Times”, to have political representation from 1868 - 1885. In the county as a whole there was a marked absence of great landed proprietors and no obvious signs of major commuting to Paddington. The General Election results for the period of study were as follows:

		<u>1859</u>	<u>1865</u>	<u>1868</u>	<u>1874</u>	<u>1880</u>	<i>Sub-total</i>
	<u>County</u>	1C,2L*	3C	2C,1L	2C,1L*	2C,1L	10C,5L
	<u>Boroughs</u>						
1	Abingdon	1L	1C	1C	1L	1L	2C,3L
2	Reading	2L	2L	2L	2L	2L	10L
3	Wallingford	1C*	1L	1C	1C	1L	3C,2L
4	Windsor	2C	2L*	1L	1C	1C	4C,3L
	<i>Sub-total</i>	3C,3L	1C,5L	2C,3L	2C,3L	1C,4L	9C,18L
	Totals	4C,5L	4C,5L	4C,4L	4C,4L	3C,5L	19C,23L

The loss of the second Windsor seat deprived the Liberals of one M.P. The boundary alterations in the county effectively balanced out. Abingdon altered, due to the small suburban additions, from being marginally Tory to just Liberal. The Windsor changes, which incorporated Eton, made the royal borough more Tory. Reading, as with

Windsor, was referred to the Select Committee in 1868 and the borough’s proposed Boundary Commission extensions were over – ruled. The Liberal dominated, and created, body did not take kindly to increasing the number of unnecessary party voters to what was already a Radical stronghold. Such a move would seriously compromise party prospects in the county. Through the local Tory M.P.s and the necessary research to do with the Select Committee proposals in 1868, Disraeli had good knowledge of all Berkshire’s constituencies, with the exception of Wallingford.

The county seat’s details were:

Electorate	1859	4,791	Population	1861	128,590
	1865	5,066 ¹		1871	134,667
	1868	7,647		1881	145,251
	1874	7,745			
	1880	8,061			

Apart from in 1865, the Tories did not run a third candidate against Walter. After that, the deal was a free run for the third seat, created by the Cairns’ clause, in return for newspaper support for Tory reform in particular, and Conservative government in general.²

Boundary changes helped to shift the rather comatose county town of Abingdon to the Liberals. Neither the electorate, nor the population, grew by very much. The figures were:

Electorate	1859	320	Population	1861	5,680
	1865	304		1871	6,571 ³
	1868	801		1881	6,608
	1874	860			
	1880	913			

¹ There were 90 county out-voters, William Powell to Disraeli, January 1st, 1863, H.P., Box 29/3, Ref. B/1/D/99a. The principal centre for county voting was Abingdon.

² There is a hint of this in one of the local M.P.’s letters to Disraeli:

“My colleagues and myself in the Rep[resentation]. In the County of Berks[hire]. are very anxious to [see]...you in the appointment of the B[oundary]. C[omission]...” Richard Benyon to Disraeli, June 23rd, 1867, H.P., Box 47/2, Ref. B/XI/J/164. Benyon, (ex-Fellowes); b. 1811; M.P. (Con.) Berkshire 1860-76;barrister; brother of Tory M.P. for Huntingdon; owned 10,100 acres at Reading.

Benyon’s colleague in the 1865 Parliament was Robert James Loyd-Lindsay, cr. 1st Baron Wantage, 1885; 1832-1901; M.P. (Con.) Berkshire 1865-85; lieutenant-colonel, won Victoria Cross, Crimean War; equerry Prince of Wales 1858-9; Financial Secretary, War Office, 1877-80; owned 20,500 acres at Wantage; founder, British Red Cross; MSS. are in the National Library of Scotland.

³ The Boundary Commission report brought in 83 terraced properties “for artisans” along the Farringdon Road to the west of the borough and 20 villas from Caldicot to the south.

Sir George Bowyer wrote about the constituency in 1880:

“If I see my way to fighting Abingdon for the Government I will do so. But as at present advised, I believe Mr. Clarke and the Presbyterians and Baptists will be too strong for me. And it would not suit my position to be defeated at my very park gates, and where my ancestors have been for 3 centuries. Without the Protestant prejudices Abingdon will be mine.”⁴

Reading was by far the largest borough in the county. It was a major centre of the Great Western Railway and its directors had influence over the town’s politics. Two Liberals were returned at every general election from 1847 – 80 inclusively. The 107 houses brought into the borough via the Boundary Commission in 1867 came from the eastern and southern suburbs. This report was called in by the Select Committee in 1868 and Spofforth’s letter to the local agent elicited the following reply:

“...satisfied with the proposal that no alteration is to be made in the existing Boundaries of Reading”.⁵

The constituency’s details were:

Electorate	1859	1,451	Population	1861	25,045
	1865	1,769		1866	c.27,059
	1868	3,228		1871	32,324
	1874	4,118		1881	42,050
	1880	5,107			

Wallingford was the centre of a large agricultural district totalling 18,000 acres. It voted Tory until 1865 when Sir Charles Dilke won the seat, only to lose it in 1868. It then remained with the Tories until 1880. As there were no boundary changes, the Liberal victory then was largely due to “Hard Times”.

⁴ Sir George Bowyer to Disraeli, 10th March, 1880, H.P., Box 119/3, Ref. B/XXI/B/782. The General Election result for Abingdon in that year was: J.C.Clarke (Lib.) 428, A.G.H.Gibbs (Con.) 386, Liberal majority 42. About the overall contest, Bowyer wrote:
“Cairns writes to me: ‘The Elections are dreadful and I am filled with alarm for the future’. He is right. We have to meet the bitter vengeance of WEG, Harcourt and Argyle (sic), the weakness of Hartington, and the old woman spite of Granville...the causes were distress and poverty...
Believe me these elections are thoroughly rotten. They are based on no principle, no want, no grievance – and even no cry. They are the feverish products of suffering – bad trade and business – bad weather, bad harvests – and want of employment”. April 10th, 1880, *ibid.*, Ref. B/XXI/B/783. He owned 4,500 acres at Radley.
⁵ Mr. Maude, Conservative agent for Berkshire, to Spofforth, July 5th, 1868, H.P., Box 46/2, Ref. B/XI/H/4. This, and all the other responses from the affected constituencies, were drawn up by Thring for Disraeli’s attention.

The seat's details were:

Electorate	1859	381	Population	1861	7,794
	1865	357		1871	8,583
	1868	942		1881	7,794
	1874	1,141			
	1880	1,225			

As the Liberals won both Windsor seats in 1865, overturning the double Tory triumph of 1859, the loss of the second M.P. was at their expense.⁶ The 1865 contest was an odd affair with one of the sitting Conservatives, W. Vansittart, changing party labels. In the three contests from 1868 – 80, there were two Tory victories in 1874 – 80 to the one Liberal success in 1868.⁷ The party totals for the three contests gave the Tories the edge:

<u>Conservative</u>	2,854
<u>Liberal</u>	2,245

The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	609	Population	1861	9,520
	1865	651		1871	17,281
	1868	1,777		1881	19,080
	1874	1,951			
	1880	2,22			

The Boundary Commission added 950 houses and a population of 4,720 to the borough. Although referred to the Select Committee, the additions were accepted. Over half the increase came from Tory Eton (excluding the College) and the rest from the suburb of Clewer to the west.

Buckinghamshire

The county suffered badly in the 1867 – 8 settlement, with the post – 1832, eleven seats coming down to eight. Apart from Aylesbury, all three boroughs lost one M.P.

⁶ An unnamed correspondent wrote in suggesting how the second seat might be retained:
“...why should not other places be grouped with it, viz. Eton and Slough, which though in a different county, are quite contiguous, by which means the county constituency would be greatly relieved”. May 11th, 1866, H.P., Box 44/1, Ref. B/XI/D/48.
⁷ The best known of the Tory M.P.s for the town was R.R.Gardner, M.P. 1874-90. A memorial in 1880 helped to explain why this was so:
“Mr. Richardson Gardner...has also a large property of over 300 houses in Windsor...”
Memorial from the town, April 9th, 1880, H.P., Box 319, Ref. C/II/6/48b.

Marlow was in Disraeli's original plan, the other two were caught by Laing's Amendment. The Tories suffered in both Buckingham and Marlow, the Liberals in Wycombe. The net effect was one lost Conservative seat. The situation was:

		<u>1832-67</u>	<u>1868-85</u>
	<u>County</u>	3	3
	<u>Boroughs</u>		
1	Aylesbury	2	2
2	Buckingham	2	1
3	Marlow	2	1
4	Wycombe	2	1
	<i>Sub-total</i>	8	5
	Totals	11	8

Tory strength in Buckinghamshire was to be found both in the county and in Marlow, whilst the Liberal stronghold was Wycombe. Matters were more evenly divided in Aylesbury and Buckingham. The results were:

		<u>1859</u>	<u>1865</u>	<u>1868</u>	<u>1874</u>	<u>1880</u>	<i>Sub-total</i>
	County (x3)	2C,1L*	3C*	2C,1L*	2C,1L	2C,1L	11C,4L
	<i>Boroughs</i>						
1	Aylesbury (x2)	2C	1C,1L*	1C,1L	1C,1L	2L	5C,5L
2	Buckingham (2-1)	1C,1L	1C,1L*	1L	1C	1L	3C,4L
3	Great Marlow (2-1)	2C	2C*	1C	1C*	1C	7C
4	Wycombe (2-1)	2L*	2L*	1L	1L	1L*	7L
	<i>Sub-total</i>	5C,3L	4C,4L	2C,3L	3C,2L	1C,4L	15C,16C
	Totals	7C,4L	7C,4L	4C,4L	5C,3L	3C,5L	26C,20L

The County Seat

As a tripartite constituency, Buckinghamshire was brought under the minority vote clause in 1867. However, it made little difference to existing patterns of representation. At the eight General Elections from 1847 – 80, two Tories and one Liberal was the normal outcome, except for 1865 when all three Conservatives were returned.⁸

⁸ Disraeli had been informed about the political balance in the county as follows:

"...Wycombe...Chesham...Wolverton, these places are under the influence of the Liberals...the non-resident voters are located as follows: London 350, Middlesex 60. I am of opinion that the Conservative Party maintains its ascendancy in the County and so long as it is satisfied with 2 of the seats, any opposition will be unsuccessful". William Powell to Disraeli, January 1st, 1863, H.P., Box 29/3, Ref. B/I/D/99a.

The main issue of the day went against the party in 1868, so the old split arrangement was adhered to.⁹ There were no real contests: even in 1874 – 80 the third Tory candidate was not a serious proposition. The only election of note was the 1876 by – election, when Disraeli went to the Lords.¹⁰ The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	5,343	Population	1861	119,073
	1865	6,126		1871	120,296
	1868	7,894		1881	117,864
	1874	7,368			
	1880	8,065			

Although he rather over – shadowed them, Disraeli’s Tory colleagues were Du Pre and Harvey. The Duke of Buckingham was the leading Conservative landowner. The election centre was Aylesbury.¹¹

The Borough Seats

Aylesbury saw a noticeable change in its politics before and after the Second Reform Acts. It returned two Conservatives in 1859 and two Liberals in 1880. As boundary changes were minimal in1867 – 8, the Tory decline was due to economic difficulties and franchise extension. As late as summer 1885, the party was trounced in a by – election, at a time when it might have expected better.¹² Not only was Disraeli

⁹ “I think you may like to know that the High Church clergy about here [Buckingham/Stowe] appear indifferent to the Irish church question – not disposed to promote petitions against the measure and less disposed to sign them”. 3rd Duke of Buckingham to Disraeli, April 18th, 1868, H.P., Box 121/2, Ref. B/XXI/B/1251.

¹⁰ The by-election was held on September 22nd and the result was: T.F.Fremantle (Con.) 2,725, R.C.G.Carington 2,539, Con. majority 186. Hardy, in his Diary, wrote of “our narrow majority” [Saturday, September 23rd, 1876], whilst Derby was much more positive:

“...The result proves that the existing excitement [over the Eastern Question] has not so far done us much harm”, Friday, September 22nd, 1876. The Liberal M.P. for Aylesbury, N.M. de Rothschild had refused to campaign for his party, as mentioned by Derby on October 13th, 1876.

¹¹ Benjamin Disraeli, cr. 1st Earl of Beaconsfield, 1876; 1804-81; M.P. (Con.) Maidstone 1837-41, Shrewsbury 1841-7, Buckinghamshire 1847-76.

Caledon George Du Pre; b. 1803; M.P. (Con.) Buckinghamshire 1839-74.

Sir Robert Bateson Harvey; 1825-87; knighted 1868; M.P. (Con.) 1863-8 and 1874-85.

Richard Plantagenet Grenville, 3rd Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, succ. 1861; 1823-89; M.P. (Con.) Buckingham 1846-57; Whip 1852, Lord President of the Council 1866-7, Colonial Secretary 1867-8; Governor of Madras 1875-80; chairman, London and North West Railway 1853-61; owned 9,500 acres at Stowe, Buckingham.

The other, major, influential landowners were: the Cavendish family (Liberal), which owned 3,500 acres at Stony Stratford in the north of the county, Lady Dashwood, 5,000 acres at West Wycombe in the south and the 6th Earl of Buckinghamshire (Conservative), 3,000 acres at Great Missenden, between Aylesbury and High Wycombe.

¹² The result of the July 18th contest was: Baron F.J. de Rothschild (Lib.) 2,353, W.Graham (Con.) 1,416, Liberal majority 937. This compares with a majority of 408 for the party’s winning of the second seat in 1880.

knowledgeable about Aylesbury's politics, but also, given its central location in Buckinghamshire and that it was close to Hughenden, he often used it, via a county dinner or agricultural show, to make speeches outlining either opposition, or government, policy.¹³ His correspondence indicated the range of problems that the party faced with such a constituency.¹⁴ The seat's details were:

Electorate	1859	1,304	Population	1861	27,090
	1865	1,225		1871	28,760
	1868	3,602		1881	28,907
	1874	4,064			
	1880	4,228			

At 69,000 acres, there was little need to extend the boundaries and the only inclusion was in the nature of a tidying up exercise, when a small, and hitherto excluded, part of Dinton was added. Apart from Aylesbury itself, the other main towns in the constituency were Princes Risborough and Wendover. The Rothschilds were just outside the borough boundary at Tring, an easy visit from Hughenden.¹⁵

In Buckingham, the Liberals won two elections to the Tories' one in the 1868 – 80 General Elections, though being out – polled by 1,382 – 1,447. The ending of the second seat was a clear Tory loss, as the party had always returned at least one Member from 1832 – 65 inclusively.¹⁶ Disraeli received sound advice both about how

¹³ Derby noted this on the Eastern Question, for instance, on September 21st, 1876; see Diary, op. cit.

¹⁴ In 1859, Lord Howe wrote:

“...I think...of getting up my son...for Aylesbury. He is an independent...against the odious Bethell...I fear there is no Government influence there at your command”. 1st Earl Howe to Disraeli, March 4th, 1859, H.P., Box 110/1, Ref. B/XX/S/216a. Howe owned 5,000 acres in the county. Sir R. Bethell, M.P. (Lib.) Aylesbury 1851-9; Solicitor-General 1853, Attorney-General 1857.

The other difficulty was raised by the vicar at Great Missenden:

“...the working of the New Reform Bill in Agricultural Districts when they happen to be included in Boroughs...several of the villages in this neighbourhood are included in the Borough of Aylesbury...The agricultural labourers...will have nothing to do with the rates...In this parish we have 300 cottages...I believe the cases in which agricultural villages are included in boroughs are but few. Might not additional powers be given to the Boundary Commissioners whereby these villages...might be thrown out of the boroughs and so treated as other country parts.

If the landlords have to pay the rates in full whilst the tenants have the vote, the whole theory of the New Reform Bill, so far as these country districts are concerned, becomes a myth and what serious difficulties are thrown in the way of improving cottages, if cottage property is to be thus burdened”. Joshua Greaves, Great Missenden vicarage to Disraeli, November 16th, 1867, H.P., Box 47/2, Ref. B/XI/J/178b.

¹⁵ They owned 10,000 acres in the county.

¹⁶ Two in 1841, 1847 and 1852.

that second M.P. might be saved in 1867 and over party electoral prospects a year later.¹⁷ The political analysis came from the 3rd Duke, who wrote:

“Having now seen some Buckingham views I can speak as to Hubbard. His chance is a bad one; with all the support that I can give him. Church questions have tended to turn the Wesleyan and other Dissenters, who formerly supported the Conservatives, and to alienate even many Church men of the Low Church school from him”.¹⁸ The constituency details (there were no boundary changes) were:

Electorate	1859	364	Population	1861	7,626
	1865	391		1871	7,545
	1868	948		1881	6,859
	1874	1,118			
	1880	1,149			

(Great) Marlow, the original site of the Royal Military College, returned two Tories at every general election from 1847 – 65. The loss of the second seat hit the party badly. The seat’s details were:

Electorate	1859	340	Population	1861	6,496
	1865	349		1871	6,627
	1868	760		1881	6,779
	1874	856			
	1880	941			

The constituency adjoined Wycombe in the north and there were no boundary changes.¹⁹

¹⁷ “I venture on a suggestion. If Buckingham be saved as a borough: old borough of Brackley and five villages of Westbury, Turweston and Mixbury would make up a fair constituency, joined with it. Brackley was one of the oldest boroughs in England – in the days of Edward III a leading wool – staple. It fell into the hands of the Bridgewater family and was deservedly disfranchised under the former Reform Bill. There is an excellent Town Hall and the Corporation is still kept up”. Dr. A. Barrett to Disraeli, June 11th, 1867, H.P., Box 47/2, Ref. B/XI/J/162.

¹⁸ 3rd Duke of Buckingham to Disraeli, July 4th, 1868, H.P., Box 121/2, Ref. B/XXI/B/1256.

John Gellibrand Hubbard, cr. 1st Baron Addington, 1887; 1805-89; M.P. (Con.) Buckingham 1859-68, City of London 1874-87; chairman, Public Works Loan Commission 1853-89; Russia merchant and a Governor of the Bank of England.

Buckinghamshire politics and elections can be followed in the Verney Papers (2nd and 3rd baronets) at the Claydon House MSS. Trust, Middle Claydon. The Liberal Verney family owned 7,000 acres in the county at Winslow, half way between Aylesbury and Buckingham. The classic study is by Richard W. Davis: “Political Change and Continuity, 1760-1885, A Buckinghamshire Study”, Newton Abbot, 1972, chapter 10.

¹⁹ The Tory M.P.s in the 1865 Parliament were: Thomas Peers Williams; 1795-1875; M.P. (Con.) Marlow 1820-68 and his cousin Colonel Brownlow Knox, M.P. for the constituency, 1847-68. The Clayton family led the Liberal cause: it owned 2,000 acres at Marlow.

Wycombe was the Liberal equivalent of Marlow with no Tory elected from 1832-80 inclusively, nor with any proper candidate standing at a general election after 1841.²⁰ There were two contested by – elections in 1862 and 1883, with the results indicating that the seat became more Liberal after 1867:

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<i>Liberal majority</i>
March 1862	158	220	62
March 1883	557	1,105	548

The loss of the second seat was at the expense of the Liberals. There were no boundary changes. The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	392	Population	1861	8,373
	1865	551		1871	10,765
	1868	1,338		1881	13,154
	1874	1,599			
	1880	1,865			

Hampshire

The constituencies for the county were as follows:

1832-67			1868-85		
	<u>County Seats</u>	<u>Number of M.P.s</u>		<u>County Seats</u>	<u>Number of M.P.s</u>
1	Northern Division	2	1	Northern Division	2
2	Southern Division	2	2	Southern Division	2
	<i>Sub-total</i>	4		<i>Sub-total</i>	4
	<u>Boroughs</u>			<u>Boroughs</u>	
	<u>Northern Division</u>			<u>Northern Division</u>	
1	Andover	2	1	Winchester	2
2	Winchester	2	2	Andover	1
3	Petersfield	1	3	Petersfield	1
	<i>Sub-total</i>	5		<i>Sub-total</i>	4
	<u>Southern Division</u>			<u>Southern Division</u>	
1	Lymington	2	1	Portsmouth	2
2	Portsmouth	2	2	Southampton	2
3	Southampton	2	3	Christchurch	1
4	Christchurch	1	4	Lymington	1
	<i>Sub-total</i>	7		<i>Sub-total</i>	6
	Total	16²¹		Total	14

²⁰ Henry Broadhurst stood as a Lib/Lab. candidate in 1874. The Liberal influence was based on the Carington family estate, which owned 16,000 acres at Wycombe Abbey.

²¹ Dod, op. cit., notes Hampshire's constituencies as 18 on p. 136 of "The Political Gazetteer".

The county lost two borough seats in 1867, both as part of Disraeli's original disfranchisement. The Conservatives suffered in Andover, the Liberals in Lymington. With no division of North Hampshire, the main redistribution issue centred on whether or not Gosport should become a separate parliamentary borough and what, as a consequence, should happen to Portsmouth's boundaries.²² The General Election results for 1859-80 were as follows:

		<u>1859</u>	<u>1865</u>	<u>1868</u>	<u>1874</u>	<u>1880</u>	<i>Sub-total</i>
	<u>County</u>						
1	Northern	2C*	2C	2C*	2C*	2C*	10C
2	Southern	1C,1L*	1C,1L*	1C,1L	1C,1L	2C*	6C,4L
	<i>Sub-total</i>	3C,1L	3C,1L	3C,1L	3C,1L	4C	16C,4L
	<u>Boroughs</u>						
	<u>Northern</u>						
1	Andover	1C,1L	1C,1L*	1L	1C	1L	3C,4L
2	Petersfield	1C*	1C*	1L	1C	1L	3C,2L
3	Winchester	1C,1L	1C,1L	1C,1L	2C	1C,1L	6C,4L
	<i>Sub-total</i>	3C,2L	3C,2L	1C,3L	4C	1C,3L	12C,10L
	<u>Southern</u>						
1	Christchurch	1C*	1C	1L	1C	1L	3C,2L
2	Lymington	1C,1L	1C,1L	1C	1C	1C	5C,2L
3	Portsmouth	1C,1L	2L	1C,1L	2C	2C	6C,4L
4	Southampton	2L	1C,1L	2C	1C,1L	2L	4C,6L
	<i>Sub-total</i>	3C,4L	3C,4L	4C,2L	5C,1L	3C,3L	18C,14L
	Totals	9C,7L	9C,7L	8C,6L	12C,2L	8C,6L	46C,28L

County Seats

The Northern Division was both solidly agricultural and Tory. There were no contests in the 1868-80 period. The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	3,649	Population	1861	131,634
	1865	4,185		1871	142,014
	1868	5,744		1881	140,872
	1874	6,033			
	1880	5,783			

²² The population figures for the whole county, excluding the parliamentary boroughs, were:

	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>
Northern Division	131,634	142,014
Southern Division	112,652	120,156
Totals	244,286	262,170

The Division's capital was Winchester, the Tory M.P.s in the 1865 Parliament were Beach and Sclater – Booth and there were a large number of major Conservative landowners in the constituency.²³

The Southern Division was much more politically divided. In terms of size, it was about half the Northern Division but contained the main centres of population in Portsmouth and its suburbs, and Southampton.²⁴ The representation was shared between 1857 – 80, when the Tories won both seats. The only three contests after 1837 were:

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Conservative majority</u>
1868	5,472	5,523	30
1874	3,878	2,382	1,496
June 1884	4,209	2,772	1,437
Totals²⁵	13,559	10,677	

²³ The other polling centres were:

East	Odiham
Central	Alton
North	Basingstoke
	Kingsclere
South	Bishop's Waltham
South East	Petersfield
West	Andover

The M.P.s were:

William Wither Bramston Beach; 1826-1901; M.P. (Con.) North Hampshire 1857-85, Andover 1885-1901; his election MSS. for 1857 are in the Gloucestershire Records Office.

George Sclater-Booth, 1st Baron Basing, 1887; 1826-94; M.P. (Con.) North Hampshire 1857-85, Basingstoke 1885-7; President of the Local Government Board, 1874-80.

The leading Tory landowners were:

Henry Howard Molyneux Herbert, 4th Earl of Carnarvon, succ. 1849; 1831-90; colonial under-secretary 1858-9, Colonial Secretary 1866-7 and 1874-8; only Cabinet minister to resign twice when Disraeli was either Leader of the Commons or Prime Minister; creator of the Union of Canada, 1867; Lord-Lieutenant, Ireland 1885-6; owned 9,000 acres at Highclere Castle, Newbury; see Sir A.H. Hardinge: "Life of Henry Howard Molyneux Herbert, 4th Earl of Carnarvon, 1831-90, 3 volumes, 1925 and C.W. de Kiewiet and F.H. Underhill, editors.: "Dufferin-Carnarvon Correspondence 1874-8", Champlain Society, xxxiii, Toronto, 1955. Carnarvon's MSS. are in the British Library and the Public Records Office.

Sir William Heathcote; 1801-81; M.P. (Con.) Hampshire 1826-32, North Hampshire 1837-49, Oxford University 1854-68; owned 14,000 acres at Winchester.

William Howley Kingsmill; owned 5,500 acres on the northern border of the county, near Newbury.

Arthur Richard Wellesley, 2nd Duke of Wellington, succ. 1852; 1807-74; M.P. (Con.) Aldeburgh 1829-32, Norwich 1837-52; owned 16,000 acres at Strathfield Saye, in the far north-east of the Division.

14th Marquis of Winchester, who owned 5,000 acres at Andover.

²⁴ Northern Division 879, Southern Division 478, square miles. The accompanying 1832 county map has a green, as well as the normal red, line. The latter indicated the border between the two seats.

²⁵ The figures require a note of explanation. In 1868, the majority is for the winning, second-placed, Tory over the losing, third-placed Liberal. In 1874, it is for the only Tory in first, over the losing Liberal in third, place. The 1884 by-election was not held at a very propitious time for the Liberals.

The Tory position improved in what was, to some extent, an urban county seat, over the twenty year period from 1865 – 85. The political ramifications of the possible enfranchisement of Gosport, or of extending Portsmouth's boundaries and how this might affect neighbouring South Hampshire, are dealt with in the next section. The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	5,865	Population	1861	112,652
	1865	5,677 ²⁶		1871	120,156
	1868	8,135		1881	126,726
	1874	9,578			
	1880	10,162			

Tory support lay in the main landlords, the rural west of the constituency and in Gosport, whilst Liberal strength was to be found in the more urban east and the unrepresented small towns.²⁷ Corry informed Disraeli about some of the difficulties concerning the seat, with which the Tories had to deal. In 1866, he wrote:

“...There can be no doubt that there is a great deal of irritation in Hampshire on this subject [New Forest licences] – and that among the most considerable men in the county. Is it worth while to stir up so much ill feeling for so few hundred pounds?”²⁸

In 1868, the issue was over the candidature:

“...In spite of Sloane, Stanley and Fane, we do not resign all hopes of South Hants. Taylor is for promising the peerage and for trying to get Lord (?) to bring out a man with Henry Scott. Fane would not stand in the way...”²⁹

²⁶ Of the 1865 electorate, 2,858 were urban voters, i.e. living in either Alverstoke or Gosport. The county election centre was Southampton with the other polling centres being:

East	Fareham
	Portsmouth
North	Romsey
West	Lymington
	Ringwood

²⁷ The leading landowners with political influence were Henry Compton, M.P. (Con.) South Hampshire 1835-57 with 2,000 acres and wealthy mineral deposits at Lyndhurst, the 3rd Earl of Malmesbury with 4,000 acres at Christchurch and John Willis-Fleming, Conservative M.P. for the seat, 1835-42, with 12,000 acres at Southampton.

²⁸ Corry to Disraeli, Friday, September 14th, 1866, H.P., Box 94/1, Ref. B/XX/Co./9.

²⁹ Corry to Disraeli, Wednesday, September 23rd, 1868, H.P., Box 94/1, Ref. B/XX/Co./46.

Henry Hamlyn Fane, b. 1817; army major; M.P. (Con.) South Hampshire 1865-8; author of “Five Years in India”; owned 4,300 acres at Ringwood.

The man “brought out” was J.C. Garnier, who came bottom of the poll in 1868 but was Conservative M.P. for South Devon, 1873-84.

Northern Division Boroughs

The Conservatives returned one M.P. for Andover from 1847 – 68 (both for the ten years from 1847 onwards), so the loss of the second seat was at their expense. Even though the party won in 1874, it lost in both 1868 and 1880. The aggregate voting was:

	Conservative	Liberal
1868-80	1,066	1,041

The seat's details were:

Electorate	1859	239	Population	1861	5,430
	1865	255		1871	5,744
	1868	775		1881	5,870
	1874	764			
	1880	832			

Andover provided a temporary haven for one of Disraeli's lawyers in 1867.³⁰ There were no boundary additions.

Petersfield was the centre of a large agricultural area and was effectively a rural, electoral district.³¹ Jolliffe was the long – standing M.P., who faced no elections after 1837. Once modern politics took over in 1867, the Liberals did rather surprisingly well, winning twice in 1868 and 1880. The respective party totals for the three contests between 1868 – 80 were:

Conservative	Liberal
914	1,137

³⁰ The Tory M.P.s in the Reform Parliament for Andover were:

William Henry Humphery, M.P. (Con.) Andover 1863-7.

Sir John Burgess Karlake, 1821-81; M.P. (Con.) Andover 1867-8, Huntingdon 1873-6; defeated Exeter 1868; solicitor-general 1866, attorney-general 1867-8 and 1874-5.

³¹ It comprised 24,350 acres. There were no boundary changes.

Either the end of Jolliffe's long association and influence, or Disraeli's achievement of "Liberal Democracy" had changed Petersfield's politics to the Tories' disadvantage.³²

Petersfield's details were:

Electorate	1859	332	Population	1861	5,655
	1865	296		1871	6,104
	1868	774		1881	6,546
	1874	870			
	1880	814			

Winchester shared its parliamentary representation at every general election from 1847 – 80 inclusively, with the single exception of 1874, when the Tories won both seats. The Liberals were just strong enough to return one M.P., the Conservatives not quite so to elect two. The average vote for the two parties at the General Elections of 1859 – 80 was:

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>
1859	372	290
1865	352	459
1868	830	610
1874	871	657
1880	791	979
Totals³³	3,216	2,995

Winchester's details were:

Electorate	1859	866	Population	1861	14,776
	1865	963		1871	16,366
	1868	1,621		1881	17,780
	1874	1,793			
	1880	2,011			

³² The estrangement was not entirely permanent: W.S.H.Jolliffe was Tory M.P. for Petersfield, 1874-80. The local situation is covered in Hanham, op. cit., p. 42, f.n. 3.

Sir William George Hylton Jolliffe, 1st Baron Hylton, cr. 1866; 1800-76; M.P. (Con.) Petersfield 1830-5 and 1841-66; under-secretary, Home Office 1852, Chief Whip 1853-9. Jolliffe's MSS. are in the Somerset County Record Office, for a flavour, see: "A Politician in the Fifties: A Selection from the Correspondence of the Right Honourable Sir William Jolliffe, Bart., M.P. (Lord Hylton)", London, John Murray, 1905. Both the index to Stanley's Journals, op. cit., p. 360 (1853: f.n. 4) and The Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, Guides to Sources on British History, volume 7, mis-state the dates when Jolliffe was Petersfield's M.P.

³³ The figures are arrived at by dividing the vote of the parties when they ran two candidates. Only in 1859 did both do this: in 1865 and 1874-80 the Tories fielded two, in 1868 the Liberals. The Conservative M.P. during the Reform parliament was William Barrow Simonds; 1820-1911; M.P. Winchester 1865-80; Simonds came bottom of the poll in 1880.

There were no boundary changes.

Southern Division Boroughs

Christchurch was held continuously by the Tories from 1832 – 68 but the Liberals then won the constituency twice in 1868 and 1880. At 22,350 acres there were no boundary changes. Liberal success, therefore, was due to the extended franchise and the economic and political issues of the day. Malmesbury explained this to Disraeli in 1868:

“Christchurch...is a hot bed of Dissent and almost every labourer and small tradesman is a dissenter and the feeling among them is execrable. Our Bill has added 800 of them to the old constituency of 420. All the gentry (and they are numerous) went well with Wolff and so did the farmers but their labourers were stolid. Men who have worked for me for 20 years voted against me, and were driven to the poll by their ministers, after promising, as if they were in Tipperary – and those who voted right told me that “it was against collar”. The Church cannot hold its own with the new electors if it does not institute a class like the bas clerge in the North Eastern counties. They have no sympathy with gentlemen parsons”.³⁴

The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	339	Population	1861	9,368
	1865	419		1871	15,415
	1868	1,329		1881	28,537 ³⁵
	1874	1,831			
	1880	2,361			

³⁴ Malmesbury to Disraeli, November 24th, 1868, H.P., Box 99/3, Ref. B/XX/Hs./157. Wolff lost by 560-609 in 1868, Liberal majority 49 and won by 978-607, Conservative majority 371 in 1874. He did not stand for the constituency in 1880, when the Tory candidate lost by 1,117-1,185, Liberal majority 68.

Sir Henry Drummond Charles Wolff; 1830-1908; M.P. (Con.) Christchurch 1874-80, Portsmouth 1880-5; defeated Dorchester 1865, Christchurch 1868, Portsmouth 1885; commissioner, Eastern Rumelia 1878-9, special mission, Turkey 1885-7, minister to Persia 1887-91, Rumania 1891-2, ambassador to Spain 1892-1900; member, Fourth Party, 1880-5. Whilst they record much that did take place, Drummond Wolff's memoirs do not necessarily tell the whole story about many matters. They are entitled “Rambling Recollections”, in two volumes, London, 1908.

³⁵ The rather extraordinary population growth was largely due to the popularity of Bournemouth, which in 1867 only had 450 houses and 3,200 residents. In 1875, Drummond Wolff introduced the “House Occupiers’ Disqualification Removal Bill”, which would have allowed owners of houses to let their tenements furnished for four months in every calendar year without having their names deleted from the electoral register. He explained that this would both allow his constituents “to enjoy their annual holiday” and not to be disfranchised: a sort of continuation of “Disraeli Democracy” from 1867. Sir William Harcourt rather unkindly called it “The Bournemouth Reform Bill” and proceeded to talk it out.

Lymington was the constituency of Lord George Gordon – Lennox, Henry Lennox's younger brother. The proposed and actual reduction in the seat stimulated correspondence. The first letter was in March 1867:

"...I must of course not lose sight of the interests of the place I represent. I had a letter from my agent who tells me that if Lymington be partially disfranchised that with household suffrage no Conservative candidate would have the ghost of a chance. To go against the party I have served for 8 years steadily would cause me the greatest possible pain".³⁶

Once it became clear that one seat would be disfranchised, Gordon – Lennox changed tack and offered his loyalty at the price of an alternative constituency.³⁷ After the second seat disappeared he requested financial support in order to try and survive.³⁸ He survived very comfortably in 1868 in spite of his forebodings and finally wrote about retiring from the constituency in 1870, which elicited a response, of sorts, from Disraeli.³⁹ Gordon – Lennox did not stand for Lymington again but the seat was easily held by a new candidate. Apart from indicating the neurosis and divisions of certain members of the family, the whole episode indicated the difficulty that even sitting M.P.s had in trying to read rather complex electoral runes. The parties shared

³⁶ Lord George Gordon-Lennox to Disraeli, March 28th, 1867, H.P., Box 47/1, Ref. B/XI/J/105. In response to this threat, Henry Edwards, Tory M.P. for Beverley advised Disraeli:

"...he [Lord George Gordon-Lennox] intends to oppose our Bill at every stage and that we shall find numbers...again with him. Thank God his influence does not extend very far...Pray see the Duke as soon as possible on the subject". Henry Edwards to Disraeli, April 1867 (Carlton Club notepaper), H.P., Box 47/2, Ref. B/XI/J/125.

Lord George responded:

"...it will be useless for Colonel Taylor to write to either of my brothers in the administration to bring their influence to bear on me...the regret I should feel at having to oppose Mr. Disraeli for whom I have the greatest possible regard". Lord George Gordon-Lennox to Disraeli, April 6th, 1867, H.P., Box 47/2, Ref. B/XI/J/111b.

³⁷ He wrote:

"Even if the place I now represent [were] to be totally disfranchised, I should stand by you, feeling sure that you would do all in your power, that I should have a seat in some of the newly made constituencies.

I have spent large sums of money to keep the Conservatives in the ascendant though I could ill afford to do so". Lord George Gordon-Lennox to Disraeli, April 8th, 1867, H.P., Box 47/2, Ref. B/XI/J/112.

³⁸ "...I came into Parliament in 1860 when I had a severe contest. My poor father promised to pay all my expenses but unfortunately his death occurred before a complete settlement took place and about £1,500 remained unpaid – and this I had to meet myself out of my paltry pittance, as my eldest brother refused me all assistance". Lord George Gordon-Lennox to Disraeli, July 3rd, 1867, H.P., Box 134/1, Ref. B/XXI/L/147.

³⁹ "I trust that you will find no difficulty in remaining in Parliament, as I know, from authority, that your seat would not be safe, if vacated.

I could not write to the person you mentioned...because...my continued interference could only lead to personal disagreements and quarrelling which I always dislike". Disraeli to Lord George Gordon-Lennox, November 30th, 1870, H.P., Box 308/4, Ref. R/I/C/65.
He was M.P. (Con.) Lymington 1860-74.

Lymington from 1847 – 65 inclusively and once the second Member went, the Tories had little difficulty in winning the three contests of 1868 – 80.

Their majorities were:

1868	131
1874	291
1880	193

The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	326	Population	1861	5,179
	1865	347		1871	5,356
	1868	662		1881	5,468
	1874	714			
	1880	771			

Political influence in the borough lay with the Burrard family. There were no boundary changes.

The main naval base and dockyard in Britain, Portsmouth had voted Liberal continuously from 1832-57. The Tories then shared the representation in 1857 – 9 before the Liberals again won both seats in 1865. “Tory Democracy” of the popular, patriotic kind then won five out of the six M.P.s elected from 1868 – 80, with matters being shared only in 1868. The key question over the town’s redistribution was what to do about Gosport, which lay outside the 1832 boundaries in South Hampshire, on the western side of Portsmouth harbour.⁴⁰ The seat’s details were:

Electorate	1859	3,821	Population	1861	94,799
	1865	4,670		1871	113,569
	1868	11,597		1881	127,989
	1874	14,931			
	1880	16,408			

The obvious policy was to make Gosport a new constituency but, given the complexity of the situation in the Commons, this had to wait until 1885.⁴¹

⁴⁰ An unnamed correspondent from Gosport wrote to Disraeli and said:

“In the parish of Alverstoke [Gosport] with 20,000 inhabitants, there have not been any meetings of the working classes to support the Reform Bill”. April 8th, 1866, H.P., Box 44/1. Ref. B/X1/D/31.

⁴¹ It then became part of the Fareham Division of Hampshire.

Instead, the Boundary Commission recommended bringing most of Gosport into Portsmouth:

	<u>Area</u>	<u>1861 Population</u>	<u>Number of houses</u>
1	Forton and Camden Town	4,500	920
2	Gosport (part)	7,257	1,542
3	Hardway	750	158
4	Newtown and Bury	3,000	679
	Totals	15,507	3,299⁴²

Portsmouth was called in by the Select Committee in 1868, which then recommended that its boundaries should not change at all. In order to assess the consequences of this for both the borough and South Hampshire, Spofforth sent out his round – robin request to the respective party agents.⁴³ No changes were made and so the 1868 – 80 General Elections were fought on old boundaries and new franchises. Local naval issues were commented upon during the campaigns.

⁴² Gosport's 1861 population was 18,466 and all the above parishes recommended for inclusion were in Alverstoke.

⁴³ The Portsmouth agent wrote:

"I think it is rather satisfactory than otherwise that Gosport is not to be added to us – all parties, except a few extreme radicals who desired annexation, manifested the greatest indifference to the question. Our constituency is nearly 5,000, and under the Reform Bill will probably exceed 10,000, and we do not desire any further increase.

The effect on the County constituency will in all probability have been reported to you...Gosport has always been Conservative but it has very greatly increased of late years and we are told by some who profess to know that its tendency is now Liberal – it would probably give from 1,500 – 2,000 borough voters. We have not had a contested County Election for so many years that it is impossible to say with any certainty which side is the stronger but it would undoubtedly tend to strengthen the Conservative party in the County if Gosport were annexed – on the other hand it would weaken us in the Borough where we most need strengthening.

Thus it [is] impossible to ascertain with accuracy even from the rate books how many will be disfranchised by the proposed contracted limits but there are 3,300 houses assessed to the Poor Rates out of which 2/3rds, or 2,200, would confer votes.

Annexation was very unpopular at Gosport and we may probably find a reason for the recommendation of the Committee in the fact that the brother of Mr. Walpole, the Chairman, is the rector of the parish of Alverstoke (which comprises Gosport) and he was, no doubt, moved to give effect to the wishes of his brother's parishioners". Henry Ford, "the leading Conservative solicitor of Portsmouth" to Spofforth, July 5th, 1868, H.P., Box 46/2, Ref. B/XI/H/4.

The South Hampshire agent took a rather different view:

"...the addition of Gosport to Portsmouth would relieve the County of a large number of voters who are...in the...Liberal interest. The annexation of Gosport to Portsmouth would not only relieve the County of many Liberal freeholders but from that much larger number which will form part of the new constitution.

The annexation of Gosport will not produce much effect in this borough [Portsmouth] beyond greatly increasing the number of voters and possibly increasing...Liberal strength.

Gosport with Alverstoke contains 3,740 inhabited houses, 26,999 inhabitants". Mr. Stegant, Conservative party agent, South Hampshire to Spofforth, July 5th, 1868, H.P., Box 46/2, Ref. B/XI/H/4.

In 1868, Disraeli received two warnings, the first from the Admiralty parliamentary secretary:

“Mr Corry’s naval colleagues having made a combined movement in favour of adding to the Iron Clad Navy, this year, it became necessary to reduce the number of dockyard labourers and a large number of hired men were discharged at Devonport, Portsmouth and Woolwich...this policy has caused great distress to thousands and has effectually damaged Tory interests at the General Election.

...the Ropery at Portsmouth has been abolished...the rope makers discharged have received a small pension...the power of giving a higher pension rests with the Treasury...The present Chancellor of the Exchequer positively refuses and if his refusal is to prevail, we dare not, show our faces at Portsmouth next November.

If something is not done and done at once – neither at Portsmouth, Chatham or Devonport, will a Tory have a chance”.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Lord Henry Lennox to Disraeli, July 18th, 1868, H.P., Box 102/4, Ref. B/XX/Lx/305.

The second one was similar and came from the one of the two candidates:

“There are two things which have operated against the Conservative interest there [Portsmouth], first, the great discharge of dockyard labourers...which entailed distress and misery...

The second is the removal of the “Britannia” school ship from Portsmouth to Dartmouth, a job of the Duke of Somerset.

...if the labourers could be taken on to the harbour works in lieu of convicts... [and] the ship could be brought back to the Solent, it would...carry one of the seats...” J.H.D.Elphinstone to Disraeli, July 21st, 1868, H.P., Box 41/2, Ref. B/XI/G/9.

Sir James Dalrymple Horn Elphinstone; 1805-86; M.P. (Con.) Portsmouth 1857-65 and 1868-80, Aberdeenshire 1866-8; defeated Greenock 1852, Portsmouth 1865; whip 1874.

In 1880 the same “cri de couer” was heard and, as in 1868, with the same positive result.⁴⁵ The voting totals vindicated Disraeli’s stance:

	Portsmouth	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>
1859		3,087	2,960
1865		3,236	4,267
1868		5,306	3,736
1874		11,806	9,232
1880		13,276	12,063
	<i>Sub-total</i>	36,711	32,258
	South Hampshire		
1859		N/a	N/a
1865		N/a	N/a
1868		5,472	5,523
1874		3,878	2,664
1880		N/a	N/a
1884		4,209	2,772
	<i>Sub-total</i>	13,559	10,959
	Totals	50,270	43,217⁴⁶

Nor, in terms of M.P.s, did the Tory position in the whole of South Hampshire seem harmed by the boundaries staying as they were:

		<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>
1859-65	<u>Portsmouth</u>	1	3
	<u>South Hampshire</u>	2	2
	<i>Sub-total</i>	3	5
1868-80	<u>Portsmouth</u>	5	1
	<u>South Hampshire</u>	4	2
	<i>Sub-total</i>	9	3
	Totals	12	8

The port of Southampton became more Conservative after the 1867-8 Acts. The Liberals won both seats from 1847 – 59 inclusively and, after then, only again in 1880. The Tories sole double triumph was in 1868, with the representation being

⁴⁵ “It is of the greatest importance that the Channel fleet should be here before the election. We have a devil of a tough fight and want all the assistance possible. Bruce has written...to W.H.Smith. The only reason for not doing this is that an old order exists for the fleet to go to Gibraltar. But this old order is no reason for depriving them of the opportunity of voting”. Sir H.D.Wolff to Disraeli, March 21st, 1880, H.P., Box 58/2, Ref. B/XII/K/10.

Thomas Charles Bruce; 1825-90; M.P. (Con.) Portsmouth 1874-85; defeated Edinburgh 1852, Helston 1868, Portsmouth 1885.

In 1868, the Conservatives won one seat, in 1880, both.

⁴⁶ In Portsmouth, 1868, and South Hampshire, 1874, the Conservatives ran one candidate only, the Liberal total being the average for the two candidates’ votes.

shared in 1865 and 1874.⁴⁷ The aggregate voting figures for the four contests held under the Second Reform Acts were:

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>
1868	4,571 ⁴⁸	4,108
1874	5,258	4,448
June 1878	2,552	2,304
1880	5,874	6,074
Totals	18,255	16,934

This limited Tory revival was political rather than to do with the boundaries, which did not alter. The main interests in Southampton were the ship-owners, particularly of the Oriental line, the railway directors and companies and the port. The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	3,730	Population	1861	46,960
	1865	4,189		1871	53,741
	1868	5,696		1881	69,235
	1874	6,537			
	1880	7,394			

In conclusion, there were no changes in Hampshire in 1867-8.

The Isle of Wight

The island had one M.P. for the county and two for the sole parliamentary borough of Newport, from 1832 – 67. This was then reduced to one by Laing's Amendment, with the reduction hurting the Conservatives. The General Election results were:

	<u>County</u>	<u>1859</u>	<u>1865</u>	<u>1868</u>	<u>1874</u>	<u>1880</u>	<u>Sub-total</u>
1)	Isle of Wight	1L	1L	1L	1C	1L	1C,4L
	<u>Borough</u>						
1)	Newport	2C	1C,1L	1L*	1L	1L	3C,4L
	Totals	2C,1L	1C,2L	2L	1C,1L	2L	4C,8L

The County Seat

This was a marginal Liberal seat. The party won five out of the six general elections from 1857 – 80, with the exception of 1874.⁴⁹ The constituency followed classic lines

⁴⁷ The Conservatives also won a contested by-election in 1878 and an uncontested one in 1883.

⁴⁸ There is a brief note about 1868:

"The Conservative agent at Southampton has his hands full with the borough election".

J. Carpenter Garnier to Corry, October 19th, 1868, H.P., Box 41/2, Ref. B/IX/G/23.

of division. Tory support lay in the agricultural countryside, in the sailing and yachting community at Cowes, in the seaside resorts, in the military garrison (though not the prison) at Parkhurst and via the royal residence at Osborne. There were neither great landowners, nor master manufacturers to exert political influence. The Liberals relied upon the small traders and shopkeepers in the towns, the largest of which was Newport and the Dissenting tradition in the villages.⁵⁰ The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	2,038	Population	1861	47,428
	1865	2,315		1871	57,697
	1868	3,807		1881	55,510
	1874	4,084			
	1880	4,954			

Newport

The Tories won both seats in 1859 and then shared the representation in 1865. However, they did not win it again, not contesting matters in 1868 and then losing the three contests held between 1870 – 80. The combination of the enhanced franchise and boundaries put paid to Tory prospects in the borough. The Commission proposed extensive, geographical, changes to the island's capital:

	Direction	Area	Political preference
1	<u>North</u>	Cowes (East and West)	Conservative
2	<u>North East</u>	Barton, Cross Lane and Whippingham	Liberal
3	<u>North West</u>	Hunny Hill	Liberal
4	<u>South West</u>	Carisbrooke (excluding the Castle and village)	Mixed/Liberal

The Select Committee called in the proposals in 1868 and Newport was put into the middle category, where the Committee agreed with most of the Commission's views

⁴⁹ The Tories also won the by-election in June 1870, when the Liberal Sir John Simeon died and was replaced by Disraeli's old "Young England" friend, Baillie Cochrane.

Alexander Dundas Ross Wishart Baillie Cochrane, 1st Baron Lamington, cr. 1880; 1816-90; M.P. (Con.) Bridport 1841-6 and 1847-52, Lanarkshire 1857, Honiton 1859-68, Isle of Wight 1870-80; defeated Bridport 1841 (at General Election), Southampton 1852, Lanarkshire 1857 (at General Election), Isle of Wight 1868; author, "Exeter Hall", "In the Days of the Dandies" and "The Morea", (1841), "Lucille Belmont, (1849). There are a couple of small extracts from his writings in John Morrow, editor: "Young England, The New Generation: A Selection of Primary Texts", London, 1999.

⁵⁰ The Tory candidate for the county in 1865 wrote about the seat three years later, as follows:

"The recent additions to the constituency have been in...favour of the Dissenters and the Liberals and the former would progress? Any Protestant candidate who would help to destroy the Church of England, in as much as some extreme Ritualists at Ryde have of late much disgusted them...I am convinced I could not succeed against a Protestant Liberal". [Sir John Simeon, Liberal M.P. for the county 1865-70, was a Roman Catholic]. Sir Charles Locock to Disraeli, October 25th, 1868, H.P., Box 41/2, Ref. B/IX/G/31.

Newport was the county election centre.

but restored both parts of Cowes to the county seat.⁵¹ The impact of the changes can be seen in the respective voting figures for town and country:

	County		Newport	
	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>
1859	694	756	316	228
1865	710	786	269	309
<i>Sub-total</i>	1,404	1,542	585 ⁵²	537
1868	1,118	1,353	N/a	N/a
1870 ⁵³	1,317	1,282	351	437
1874	1,614	1,605	475	522
1880	1,973	1,986	560	618
<i>Sub-total</i>	6,022	6,226	1,386	1,577
Totals	7,426	7,768	1,971	2,114

The overall Liberal vote of 9,882 compares with 9,397 for the Tories. Newport became, if not quite a Liberal stronghold, then strong enough. The county seat was divided between the parties 2 – 2 from 1868 – 80 and this cannot quite be seen as a Tory gain to off – set the loss of the second Newport seat.

Newport's details were:

Electorate	1859	647	Population	1861	7,934
	1865	643		1871	8,522
	1868	965		1881	9,110
	1874	1,166			
	1880	1,362			

⁵¹ Mr. Joyce, the Tory agent for the island, replied to Spofforth's inquiry as follows:

"[I am] personally against incorporating the towns of East and West Cowes". July 5th, 1868, H.P., Box 46/2, Ref. B/XI/H/4.

⁵² In 1859-65 the Conservatives ran two candidates and the figure given is the average vote for the party.

⁵³ The county by-election took place in June, the borough one in November. Both were occasioned by the deaths of the sitting Liberal M.P.s.

Kent

From 1832 – 67 Kent had eighteen M.P.s constituted as follows:

	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Number of M.P.s</u>
County		
1)	Eastern Division	2
2)	Western Division	2
<i>Sub-total</i>		4
Boroughs		
<u>Eastern Division</u>		
1)	Canterbury	2
2)	Dover	2
3)	Sandwich	2
4)	Hythe	1
<i>Sub-total</i>		7
<u>Western Division</u>		
1)	Greenwich	2
2)	Maidstone	2
3)	Rochester	2
4)	Chatham	1
<i>Sub-total</i>		7
Totals		18

There was no disfranchisement as the county contained no doubly represented small boroughs. Tory strength lay in the county divisions and in the boroughs of Canterbury and Dover. The Liberal strongholds were Hythe, Maidstone, Rochester and Sandwich. At c.450,000, the total county population justified a doubling of the number of M.P.s from 4 – 8, achievable either by splitting the existing divisions into two (the Tory way), or by a wholesale remodelling along the lines of 1885, i.e. East, North, South and West (the Liberal preference). The overall pusillanimity of Disraeli's county settlement was well illustrated by the fact that only West Kent was divided by the creation in 1868 of the new, Mid Division, leaving East Kent both undivided and unwieldy. The other enfranchisement issue was the creation of Gravesend as a parliamentary borough.

From 1868 – 85, therefore, the county's total of M.P.s increased to only 21, as follows:

County			Boroughs		
1)	<u>Eastern Division</u>	2	<u>Eastern Division</u>	(as for 1832-67)	7
2)	<u>Mid Division</u>	2	<u>Mid Division</u>		
3)	<u>Western Division</u>	2	1)	Maidstone	2
	<i>Sub-total</i>	6	2)	Rochester	2
			3)	Chatham	1
			4)	Gravesend	1
			<i>Sub-total</i>		6
			<u>Western Division</u>		
			1)	Greenwich	2
			<i>Sub-total</i>		15
	Total				21

The General Election results from 1859 -80 inclusively for the county were:

	<u>County</u>	<u>1859</u>	<u>1865</u>	<u>1868</u>	<u>1874</u>	<u>1880</u>	<u>Sub-total</u>
1)	East	2C*	1C,1L	2C	2C	2C	9C,1L
2)	Mid	N/a	N/a	2C	2C	2C	6C
3)	West	2C	2C	2C	2C	2C	10C
<i>Sub-total</i>		4C	3C,1L	6C	6C	6C	25C,1L
	<u>Boroughs</u>						
1)	Canterbury (x2)	1C,1L	2C	1C,1L	2C	2C ⁵⁴	8C,2L
2)	Chatham (x1)	1C	1L	1L	1C	1C	3C,2L
3)	Dover (x2)	2C	2C	1C,1L	2C	2C	9C,1L
4)	Gravesend (x1)	N/a	N/a	1L	1C	1L	1C,2L
5)	Greenwich (x2)	2L	2L	2L	1C,1L	2C	3C,7L
6)	Hythe (x1)	1L*	1L*	1L	1L	1L*	5L
7)	Maidstone (x2)	2L	2L	2L	2L	2C	2C,8L
8)	Rochester (x2)	2L	2L	2L	2L	1C,1L	1C,9L
9)	Sandwich (x2)	2L	2L	2L	2L	2L*	10L
<i>Sub-total</i>		4C,10L	4C,10L	2C,13L	7C,8L	10C,5L	27C,46L
Totals		8C,10L	7C,11L	8C,13L	13C,8L	16C,5L	52C,47L

The results by Division were:

	<u>East</u>	<u>Mid</u>	<u>West</u>
1859	5C,4L	N/a	3C,6L
1865	5C,4L	N/a	2C,7L
1868	4C,5L	2C,6L	2C,2L
1874	6C,3L	4C,4L	3C,1L
1880	6C,3L	6C,2L	4C
Totals	26C,19L	12C,12L	14C,16L

⁵⁴ This election result was declared void and the borough's writ suspended.

The County Seats

Eastern Division

This great agricultural constituency comprised 40% of the county. Unsurprisingly, it was a Tory stronghold, or at least it became one after 1867 – 8, though there were major areas of Liberal strength, particularly at the seaside resort of Ramsgate, the railway junction of Ashford and the small towns of Sheerness and Sittingbourne. The Conservatives benefited from both the big increase in the electorate and the general trends in Kent politics, returning both M.P.s from 1868 – 80 and winning a contested by – election in the difficult circumstances of May 1868.⁵⁵ East Kent's details were:

Electorate	1859	8,312	Population	1861	165,261
	1865	8,250		1871	189,034
	1868	13,107		1881	208,446
	1874	12,605			
	1880	13,097			

Liberal fortunes in the Division were headed by the Knatchbull family, whilst the Tories had a most eclectic collection which included both the respectable gentry and the titled families of Fitzwalter and Sondes, who supplied (with E.L.Pemberton) the party's M.P.s during the Disraeli era, as well as idiosyncratic, aristocratic riff – raff

⁵⁵ By way of contrast, the parties had returned 1 M.P. each in 1852-7 and 1865, with the Liberals also winning a contested by-election in January 1863.

Disraeli had received local advice as to what might be done about Ramsgate in 1866:

"To Sandwich...might be added Ramsgate...and in the majority of cases would probably help the Conservative cause by removing diverse Radical strongholds (Ramsgate, to wit) from the Register of the Counties.

By the bye – Sir B. Bridges' proposal to give a Member to the Isle of Thanet was a great mistake. It was felt to be so, even by our own party. The public meetings held were almost unanimous against it. Ramsgate might very well be added to Sandwich, because we are municipally connected – our chief officer being merely "Deputy Mayor" to Sandwich. Letter from President, Ramsgate Temperance Society to Disraeli, October 11th, 1866, H.P., Box47/1, Ref. B/XI/J/56.

such as the Earls of Thanet and Winchilsea.⁵⁶

Mid Division

The new county seat, which gave the Tories two additional M.P.s, was created out of the eastern two – thirds of the old 1832 – 67 Western Division. It was overwhelmingly agricultural and can be taken as the almost perfect addition to the Tory cause in the counties. It ran along the Thames in the north, from the new parliamentary borough of Gravesend to the mouth of the River Medway opposite Sheerness. In the south, it bordered Sussex stretching from Tunbridge Wells in the west to the unchanged boundary with East Kent. The centre of the Division was Maidstone, which with Chatham, Gravesend and Rochester made up the four parliamentary boroughs in Mid Kent.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ The Knatchbull family owned 4,600 acres at Ashford.

Sir Brook William Bridges, cr. 1st Baron Fitzwalter 1868; 1801-75; M.P. (Con.) East Kent February-December 1852 and 1857-68; defeated Sandwich 1837, East Kent 1852; owned 4,300 acres at Wingham, between Canterbury and Sandwich. Hardy wrote of him (as of the other peers created in 1868):

“...all wealthy Conservative M.P.s and faithful followers of Derby”. Diary, op. cit., Wednesday March 18th, 1868, f.n.2.

George Watson Milles, 5th Baron Sondes 1874; 1824-94; M.P. (Con.) East Kent 1868-74; owned 14,000 acres at Faversham. When the 4th Baron died in 1874, Hardy wrote:

“The papers announce...Lord Sondes’ [death] which much affects East Kent”, Diary, op. cit., December 19th, 1874.

Richard Tufton, 1813-71; illegitimate, born Verdun, France; naturalized 1849, cr. baronet 1851; succ. by will to estates of the 11th Earl of Thanet, 1849; m. 1849; high sheriff, Kent 1859. Tufton’s son, Sir Henry James Tufton, 1844-1926, succ. as 2nd baronet, 1871, becoming Baron Hothfield of Hothfield, 1881. In 1872 he married a rector’s daughter. The Thanet/Tufton/Hothfield line owned 10,100 acres near Ashford.

11th Earl of Winchilsea (Finch-Hatton), 1815-87; succ. 1858; styled Viscount Maidstone 1826-58; M.P. (Con.) North Northamptonshire 1837-41; racehorse owner, poetaster and debtor; entered army as a private, c.1875; probably lost both house and estates in Northamptonshire; owned 7,000 acres near Ashford.

There was one last oddity in this most interesting of seats. Corry received the following note in 1868 from W.A.MacKinnon jnr., who was Liberal M.P. for Lymington 1857-68 and Lord George Gordon-Lennox’s colleague, in the 1865 Parliament. He wrote:

“In East Kent I formed a constituency association which sent 50 of my tenants to the poll and a vast number more for the two who won the day [presumably Milles and Pemberton]. In North Lancashire, I have 300 men who work in my mine...and left Lord Hartington a good way behind. In Lymington my votes won the day and in Rye my votes carried the day”. W.A.MacKinnon to Corry, from Acrise Park, Canterbury, November 23rd, 1868, H.P., Box42/4, Ref. B/X/C/34a.

Quite why Mackinnon changed sides, if he did is not clear. It may have been hereditary: his father had gone the other way from Conservative to Liberal.

⁵⁷ The county polling places in the pre-1868 seat were Cranbrook, Gravesend, Maidstone and Tonbridge.

The statistical details were:

Electorate	1868	8,723	Population	1867	119,149 ⁵⁸
	1874	8,905		1871	135,995
	1880	8,602		1881	147,062

The Conservatives comfortably won all three General Elections from 1868 – 80. The voting totals were:

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Conservative majority</u> ⁵⁹
1868	6,499	5,740	376
1874	3,626	2,956	586
1880	7,839	6,338	465
Totals	17,964	15,034	

About the election in 1868, Hardy wrote:

“...a real contest has come and Holmesdale was off to work. The candidates are absolute strangers to the County, no doubt sent by the Reform Club, a new thing in a County”.⁶⁰

Disraeli was well acquainted with the constituency. Hardy lived there and Hart Dyke and Holmesdale were both M.P.s for the Division until 1880.⁶¹

Western Division

West Kent was won by the Tories at the General Elections of 1852 and 1859 – 65, with the Liberals winning both seats in 1857. It had become highly marginal with the majorities before the Acts of 1867 – 8 being:

1852	C541
1857	L407
1859	C100
1865	C158 ⁶²

⁵⁸ The 1867-8 figures exclude Gravesend and allow for the Chatham and Rochester boundary changes.

⁵⁹ The Conservative majority is for the winning, second-placed, Tory candidate over the losing, third-placed Liberal one. In 1874, the Liberals only ran one candidate so the combined Tory vote has been halved.

⁶⁰ Hardy Diary, op. cit., Friday, November 13th, 1868.

⁶¹ For biographical details, see Kent, West.

⁶² The majority is for the winning, second-placed candidate over the losing third-placed one.

Only in 1859 – 65 did both parties run two candidates with the respective totals being:

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>
1859	7,453	7,044
1865	8,187	7,757
Totals	15,640	14,801

With the agricultural part of the old, pre – 1867 seat disappearing in that year in order to form Mid Kent, the more diverse, urban and less agricultural western third only remained. This ran from the parliamentary borough of Greenwich in the far north – west of the Division, along the banks of the Thames to include Dartford and Woolwich and inland past Beckenham, Bromley and Sevenoaks to Edenbridge, Hever and Penshurst in the south.⁶³ The key redistribution issue for Disraeli was to get the Greenwich boundaries sharply increased, thus taking Liberals out of what was, in effect, becoming an urban county seat. The suburbs, which had grown up since 1832 now commuted into the capital. The Tory ones were Beckenham, Blackheath, Bromley, Eltham, Lee, Lewisham and Sydenham, whilst Liberal strength lay in the working – class areas of Dartford, Erith, Kidbrooke, Penge, Plumstead and Woolwich. The Tory suburbs were served by the London, Chatham and Dover Railway with a branch line on the way in 1867 to Sevenoaks and Maidstone. The Liberal areas lay along or just inland from, the coast, with the exception of Penge. They were served by the North Kent Coast Railway, which went via Dartford, Gravesend and Rochester. Both lines converged at the new London terminus of Blackfriars Station, which had opened in 1863.

The pre – Boundary Commission population for the new seat was 128,714 but the Greenwich extension, taking in both Plumstead and a part of Woolwich, reduced this by 27,224.⁶⁴ The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	8,948	Population	1861	277,058
	1865	9,811		1867	101,490
	1868	8,828		1871	154,996
	1874	11,973		1881	207,445
	1880	14,873			

⁶³ County voting in the pre-1868 western part of the seat took place at Bromley only.

⁶⁴ This shift in the balance of the constituency was reflected in the choice of the new election centre. In the 1867 Act it was proposed to be Blackheath but the Commission then moved it to Sevenoaks. Although the Greenwich report was called in by the Select Committee in 1868, it was not altered.

As the sitting Tory M.P.s, Hart Dyke and Holmesdale, both chicken – ran to the seemingly much safer Mid Division, the situation for the Conservatives appeared far from secure. This act of cowardice, plus the need to find two new candidates and the disruption caused to established voting patterns by the 1867 – 8 changes, presented the Liberals with their best chance of victory in 1868. The relevant General Election figures were:

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Conservative majority</u>
1868	6,818	6,519	55
1874	10,522	6,737	1,836
1880	6,200 ⁶⁵	4,857	129
Totals	23,540	18,113	

The Liberal opportunity came and went in 1868. Commuting via the railways, the social and economic changes of the 1870s and 1880s, the widening of the county electorate and Gladstone's presence at Greenwich, all materially aided the Tory cause.⁶⁶

East Kent Boroughs

There were no boundary changes in any of the Division's four constituencies. The cathedral city of Canterbury was Tory but not overwhelmingly so, the party winning both seats in 1865 and 1874 – 80, the Liberals sharing the representation in 1859 and 1868.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ The Conservative total is averaged between the two candidates as the Liberals only ran one. The majorities are for the winning, second-placed Tory over the losing, third-placed Liberal. A third Tory ran in 1880, gaining 977 votes and finishing fourth.

⁶⁶ The M.P.s and landowners of consequence in the Division were:

Sir William Hart Dyke; 1837-1931; M.P. (Con.) West Kent 1865-8, Mid Kent 1868-85, Dartford 1885-1906; 7th baronet, 1875; whip 1868-74, Chief Whip 1874-80; Irish Chief Secretary 1885-6, Vice-President, Council for education 1887-92; owned 8,000 acres at Lullingstone Castle, Dartford.

William Archer Amherst Holmesdale, styled Viscount, Baron Amherst 1880, 3rd Earl 1886; 1836-1910; M.P. (Con.) West Kent 1859-68, Mid Kent 1868-80; severely wounded at Battle of Inkerman; owned 16,000 acres at Linton Park, Maidstone.

Sir Charles Henry Mills, knighted 1872, cr. 1st Baron Hillingdon 1886; 1830-98; M.P. (Con.) West Kent 1868-85; banker; owned 2,700 acres in Middlesex.

John Gilbert Talbot; 1835-1910; M.P. (Con.) West Kent 1868-78, Oxford University 1878-1910; parliamentary secretary, Board of Trade 1878-80; chairman, West Kent Quarter Sessions 1867-; ecclesiastical commissioner; owned estate at Edenbridge.

John Charles Pratt, 3rd Marquis of Camden; (Lib.); owned 7,200 acres at Sevenoaks.

⁶⁷ The General Election result of 1880 was declared invalid, largely because of the intervention of Butler-Johnstone, which is alluded to later.

There were six contests during the 1859 – 80 period and the voting figures were:

<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>
10,448	8,606

The increase in the electorate in 1867 and national political developments in the South East aided the Tory cause. The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	1,831	Population	1861	21,324
	1865	1,603		1871	20,962
	1868	3,001		1881	21,704
	1874	3,103			
	1880	3,089			

The Tory M.P.s for the city in the 1865 Parliament were a mixture of the political lawyer on the make and a free – wheeling independent: J.W.Huddleston and H.A.M.B.Johnstone.⁶⁸ Both published diarists did not think highly of Johnstone, though what they considered to be his idiosyncrasies were more to do with the foreign policy of the 1870s than the domestic electoral arrangements of the 1860s. As Hardy's third son, Alfred, became M.P. for Canterbury in 1878, at an uncontested by – election at the height of the Near Eastern crisis on Johnstone's resignation, and was subsequently threatened by his switch of allegiance in 1880, the diarist took a dim view of his sanity.⁶⁹

Dover's military and naval tradition meant that it was the Tory borough stronghold in the Eastern Division, the party winning both seats at every general election from 1859 -80, except for the sole Liberal success in 1868. There were, in addition, two by – elections with the Liberals winning the first but losing the second.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ John Walter Huddleston, 1815-90; M.P. (Con.) Canterbury 1865-8, Norwich 1874-5; judge of the Court of Common Pleas, 1875.

Henry Alexander Munro Butler-Johnstone, 1837-1902; M.P. (Con.) Canterbury 1862-78, stood as Liberal for Canterbury, 1880, when defeated.

⁶⁹ He wrote:

"I hope B[utler]. J[ohnstone]. is not worse than mad but I have my doubts..." Diary, op. cit., Friday, June 11th, 1880.

Derby also considered his views on nascent imperialism as mad, writing;

"Butler-Johnstone, a clever, but half-cracked disciple of Urquhart, is in constant communication with the Turkish authorities, and is said to have told them that he represents the views of the prime minister..." Diary, op. cit., January 1st, 1877.

Butler-Johnstone later became an early Communist.

⁷⁰ November 25th, 1871: G.Jessel (Lib.) 1,235, E.W.Barnett (Con.) 1,144, Liberal majority 91.

September 23rd, 1873: E.W.Barnett (Con.) 1,415, J.S.Forbes (Lib.) 1,089, Conservative majority 326. G. Jessel was appointed Solicitor-general in 1871 and Master of the Rolls in 1873.

The defeat of the second Tory candidate, C.K.Freshfield, in 1868 by forty – eight votes was largely due to party in – fighting.⁷¹ However, by 1873, local disputes had been rectified and even Derby was impressed by what the Tory capture of the second seat might portend.⁷² Dover’s statistical details were:

Electorate	1859	2,038	Population	1861	25,325
	1865	2,318		1871	23,506
	1868	3,392		1881	30,270
	1874	3,714			
	1880	4,260			

Hythe was a decayed “Cinque Port” and a Liberal pocket borough owned by the ship – owner, S. Marjoribanks and Baron M.A. de Rothschild. It voted Liberal at every general election from 1832 – 80 inclusively. There was no contest in 1859 – 65, nor 1880, no proper party conflict in 1874 and only in 1868 did the Tories fight.⁷³ However, the development of Anglican Folkestone as a holiday resort gave the Tories some hope for the future. The seat’s details were:

Electorate	1859	997	Population	1861	21,367
	1865	1,291		1871	24,078
	1868	2,275		1881	28,239
	1874	2,445			
	1880	2,748			

⁷¹ He wrote:
 “The return of Mr. Jessel, the Liberal candidate, was due to the loss of votes to the 2nd Conservative, by reason of Major Dickson’s polling plumpers tho’ standing jointly...the feeling of the party here is very bitter against Mr. Churchward and Major Dickson and I greatly fear the Conservative party is broken up”. C.K.Freshfield to Corry, November 19th, 1868, H.P., Box 41/2, Ref. B/IX/G/64.
 Alexander George Dickson, 1834-89; M.P. (Con.) Dover 1865-89; major.
 Charles Kaye Freshfield, 1812-91; M.P. (Con.) Dover 1865-8 and 1874-85; joint solicitor, Bank of England 1840-69.
 On the four occasions at which the two candidates stood together, the votes were:

	<u>Dickson</u>	<u>Freshfield</u>
1865	1,026	1,012
1868	1,461	1,387
1874	1,316	1,595
1880	1,701	1,734
Totals	5,504	5,728

⁷² “News of Dover election being won by the Conservative candidate, which was not expected, the Liberal, Fowler (sic), having great influence owing to his connexion with the L.C.& D. railway, of which he is general manager or secretary...This really looks like winning at the general election if we make no blunder”. Diary, op. cit., September 23rd, 1873. For “Fowler”, read J.S.Forbes, the Liberal candidate; “L.C. & D.” meant “London, Chatham and Dover”.
⁷³ The result was Conservative 521, Liberal 1,268.

Sandwich was the second Liberal pocket borough in the Division. The town, itself, was static and decaying but Deal and Walmer, as seaside resorts, provided the necessary impetus. The Liberals won both seats at every General Election from 1859 – 80 inclusively, with the Tories managing one legitimate by-election success in 1866 and one illegitimate one in 1880, caused by Hugessen's elevation to the peerage. The latter contest led to a Royal Commission with the consequence that because of extensive bribery the writ was suspended and the constituency was incorporated into East Kent in June 1885.⁷⁴ Sandwich's details were:

Electorate	1859	1,030	Population	1861	13,750
	1865	1,054		1871	14,885
	1868	1,906		1881	15,655
	1874	2,046			
	1880	2,115			

Mid Kent Boroughs

Chatham, with its military and naval ties, was a marginal Tory seat. It voted for the party at the General Elections of 1859 and 1874 – 80, and for the Liberals from 1865 – 8 inclusively.⁷⁵ The sociological trends in the constituency, such as the development of the North Kent railway and the subsequent growth of commuting, added to national developments such as the much more explicit party divide on military and naval affairs after 1868, helped the Conservatives. Nor did the big rise in the electorate harm the party's prospects.

⁷⁴ The results were:

	Conservative	Liberal
May 1866	466	458
May 1880	1,145	705

Edward Hugessen Knatchbull-Hugessen, cr. 1st Baron Brabourne, 1880; 1829-83; M.P. (Lib.) Sandwich 1857-80; colonial under-secretary 1871-4.

The Tory by-election winner in 1866 was Charles Capper, b. 1822; M.P. (Con.) Sandwich 1866-8; defeated Sandwich, 1865; merchant and ship-owner; chairman, Southampton Dock Co.; author of "The Port and Trade of London".

⁷⁵ There was also a contested by-election in 1875 which the Tories won. The aggregate voting totals for the four Tory and two Liberal victories from 1859-80 were: Conservative 10,079, Liberal 9,512, majority 567.

The details were:

Electorate	1859	1,544	Population	1861	36,177
	1865	2,104 ⁷⁶		1871	45,792
	1868	4,518		1881	46,788
	1874	4,935			
	1880	5,548			

Patriotic, working – class “Tory Democracy” appeared tailor – made for the seat. However, the bringing into the borough by the Boundary Commission of the radical strongholds of Gillingham and Luton accounted, in large part, for the decline in the Tory majorities after 1874.⁷⁷ There was obviously no Tory M.P. for Chatham during the 1865 Reform Parliament but Gorst was a great adornment to the constituency from the mid – 1870s onwards.⁷⁸

Gravesend was Kent’s answer to Birkenhead as the only new, southern, borough to be created outside London. It survived all the various proposed, and actual, changes made in 1867 – 8.⁷⁹ The constituency details were:

Electorate	1868	2,722	Population	1867	24,839 ⁸⁰
	1874	2,856		1871	27,493
	1880	3,211		1881	31,283

There were four contests between 1868 – 80, with the April 1880 General Election result declared void and being re – run in July.

⁷⁶ An unnamed correspondent wrote to Spofforth about the electorate in 1865 as follows:

“The increase in voters (1866) within the whole of the parishes of Chatham and Gillingham (voters without the borough boundaries):

Chatham	96
Gillingham	302
	398”

H.P., Box 45/1, Ref. B/XI/F/22.

⁷⁷ They were:

1874	656
February 1875	215
1880	101

⁷⁸ Sir John Eldon Gorst, 1835-1916; M.P. (Con.) Cambridge 1866-8, Chatham 1875-92; principal party agent 1870-77; see Archie Hunter: “A Life of Sir John Eldon Gorst, Disraeli’s Awkward Disciple”.

⁷⁹ On grounds of population, Gravesend was reasonably placed when ranked with the other southern possibilities: Clifton, Gosport, Lowestoft, Luton, Ramsgate and Torquay.

⁸⁰ This figure takes into account the Boundary Commission alteration mentioned below.

The only Tory victory was in 1874 and the party majorities indicated that a marginal Liberal seat had been created.⁸¹ A resident of the town had advised Disraeli:

“The electors of Gravesend will be pilots, seafaring men and mechanics and keepers of lodging houses, representing the already well represented class of beer drinkers”.⁸²

Whether he considered this to be an electorally advantageous state of affairs, or not, is unrecorded. Again, as with Chatham, there was no local M.P., either for the borough itself, or for Mid Kent, to advise. The Boundary Commission subsequently reduced the extent of the new seat by lopping off the agricultural, southern part of Northfleet.⁸³

The final population breakdown for the two constituent parts of the seat was:

Gravesend and Milton	18,039
Northfleet (reduced)	c.6,800
Total	24,839

Kent's county town voted Liberal at the four general elections from 1859 – 74 inclusively. It then swung against the trend to the Tories in 1880 with a twenty – five per cent increase in the vote for the party's candidates and with the large increase in the electorate having already taken place in 1868.⁸⁴ Maidstone was a centre for Anglicanism, corn and hops as well as being a sub – port for Rochester, all of which should have made it Tory. However, the constituency was also partly industrial with both paper and timber interests, and was also the main link between the South Eastern and the London, Dover and Chatham railways, which tended to push it towards the Liberals. The three main writers on political sociology, before, during and after the 1867 – 8 Acts, Dod in the 1850s, Hanham on the 1860s and 1870s, and Pelling for the

⁸¹ They were:

1868	L168
1874	C213
April 1880	L122
July 1880	L220

⁸² Henry Surridge to Disraeli, May 8th, 1866, H.P., Box 44/1, Ref. B/XI/D/47.

⁸³ Although extensive as to acreage at 2,044, the population affected numbered only c. 300. On the accompanying borough map, this was the area to the south of Watling Street.

⁸⁴ The combined vote for both parties' candidates in 1874-80 were:

	Conservative	Liberal
1874	2,779	3,049
1880	3,797	3,349

There were no boundary changes to Maidstone.

1880s onwards all stressed the importance of bribery, money and venality in the casting of the town's votes. It seems that in Maidstone's case, the Liberals were simply better at it than the Tories.⁸⁵ The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	1,848	Population	1861	23,058
	1865	1,817		1871	26,198
	1868	3,420		1881	29,647
	1874	3,517			
	1880	3,878			

As an ancient city adjoining Chatham, there was much about Rochester that should have assisted the Tories. It was both a port on the River Medway and a bishopric. However, the party's double victory in 1852 was the last for twenty – eight years until the single victory of 1880, when the second seat was won. Gorst, as the neighbouring M.P. was able to explain matters, two years after the passing of the Reform Acts.⁸⁶ Over the decade from 1870 – 80 Tory fortunes clearly improved, in a similar fashion to developments in Maidstone. The relevant results were:

	Conservative	Liberal	Majority
July 1870	550	987	L437
1874	835	1,144	L309
June 1878	1,004	1,284	L280
1880	1,393	1,294	C99 ⁸⁷

⁸⁵ The only local Tory landowner of note was Charles, Viscount Marsham, succ. as 3rd Earl of Romney, 1845; 1808-74; M.P. (Con.) West Kent 1841-5; owned 4,000 acres at The Mote, Maidstone.

⁸⁶ He wrote:

"The Conservative Party in Rochester has never pulled its strength since 1859. Since the candidate in 1865 and 1868 was not acceptable to the whole party...the Mayor, the entire town council, the overseer, assistant overseers and rate collectors are all radicals...The chief employers of labour are of the same party – Foord, a large government contractor, Aveling and Porter agricultural engineers, Nayler a builder. The radicals have an influential supporter in Levy, a man who lends money and has much house property. There are no Conservative large employers of labour...the gentry...take [an] interest in the county elections...[but] take little in the borough elections...The Chapter has...exercised no influence at all...An Association of Working men is about to be formed to advocate what is called "Reciprocity". It is hoped by this means to get a hold upon the lower class of voters. The ballot is looked forward to rather as an advantage than otherwise". J.E.Gorst to Disraeli, July 25th, 1870, H.P., Box 129/2, Ref. B/XXI/G234.

⁸⁷ The majorities for the two General Elections are for second-placed over third in 1874, and for second-placed over fourth in 1880, as the Tory candidates were second and third compared to the Liberals first and last places. The party totals in 1880 were:

Conservative	2,705
Liberal	2,791

The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	1,419	Population	1861	16,862
	1865	1,458		1871	18,352
	1868	2,569		1881	21,590
	1874	2,676			
	1880	3,051			

There were no boundary changes.

West Kent Borough

The only surviving seat in the county division was Greenwich. The borough, in many ways part of London rather than Kent as it was only about five miles from the City, voted Liberal from 1832 – 68, apart from the return of single Tory M.P.s in both 1837 and 1852. Four factors triggered the Tory revival, which led to the famous by – election victory in August 1873, the retaining (by not very much) of this seat in 1874 and then the double triumph of metropolitan “Tory Democracy” in 1880. They were the growing importance of military and naval matters, the expansion of both electorate and population, the extension of the boundaries and the respective party candidacies of Gladstone and Boord. The former was compromised by foreign policy inactivity and, perhaps, failure whilst the latter was the ideal Tory candidate: a metropolitan distiller, of beer certainly, whether of gin is less likely. The constituency details were as follows:

Electorate	1859	7,942	Population ⁸⁸	1861	139,436
	1865	9,805		1871	169,361
	1868	15,588		1881	206,651
	1874	17,599			
	1880	21,032			

The huge population growth was due to railway commuting, the naval and ship – building industries at Greenwich itself, the military arsenals at Deptford and Woolwich and tourism from London.

⁸⁸ The figures include the boundary extensions mentioned later in the text. Greenwich's population in 1831 was 65,917.

The Boundary Commission accounted for much of the increase by 1871 via the eastern incorporation of Plumstead into the seat.⁸⁹ The parish's figures were:

	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1867 (estimated)</u>
Population	8,373	24,502	31,312
Inhabited houses	1,376	3,195	4,083

The Commission could quite legitimately have extended southwards as well, taking in Kidbrooke and Lewisham, but these essentially metropolitan communities were left in West Kent. The voting figures of interest after the 1867 – 8 Reform Acts were as follows:

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Majority</u>
1868	9,076	13,070	L1,682
August 1873	4,525	2,379	C2,146
1874	11,754	11,223	L407
1880	18,483	16,293	C1,088
Totals	43,838	42,965⁹⁰	

There was some correspondence in 1868 which gave a flavour to the seat's politics and explained some of the problems faced by the Tory candidates in that year.

⁸⁹ The Registrar-General had written that:
 “...this parish [Plumstead] had the most remarkable proportionate increase, of both houses and population, 1851-61, of any...of the Metropolitan Districts”. See Boundary Commission report for Greenwich, 1867.

⁹⁰ The party totals are for the three General Elections in which the Tories were placed:

1868	3 rd and 4 th
1874	1 st and 3 rd
1880	1 st and 2nd

The majorities are for the winning, second-placed candidate over the losing, third-placed one, except for 1873. The by-election saw 6 candidates standing, 2 rogue ones for each party in addition to the proper candidacies of T.W. Boord (Con.) and J.B.Langley (Lib.). Even allowing for the mavericks, the party totals in 1873 were:

Conservative	Liberal
4,579	3,767

Thomas William Boord, 1838-1912; M.P. (Con.) Greenwich 1873-95; distiller.
 W.E.Gladstone's magnificent election record was as follows: M.P. (as Con.) Newark-on-Trent 1832-47, Oxford University 1847-65, M.P. (as Lib.) South Lancashire 1865-8, Greenwich 1868-80, Edinburghshire (Midlothian) 1880-95; won but did not take up seat: Leeds 1880, Leith 1886; defeated (as Con.) Manchester 1837, (as Lib.) Oxford University 1865, South West Lancashire 1868.

Viscount Mahon, who came bottom of the poll, wrote:

“At Woolwich and Charlton we expect a large majority, at Greenwich things look well also...as also at Deptford. The Government dockyards at Woolwich and Deptford we know little about and should be glad could anything be done...distress among the poor is so great that if Salomons spends money he will succeed”.⁹¹

In conclusion, the Tories made a net gain of one from redistribution in Kent in 1867 – 8. The two extra seats in Mid Kent were offset by the loss of the new, largely Liberal, borough of Gravesend.

Middlesex

After 1832 Middlesex’s parliamentary representation was as follows:

	<u>County</u>	2
	<u>Boroughs</u>	
1)	City of London	4
2)	Finsbury	2
3)	Marylebone	2
4)	Tower Hamlets	2
5)	Westminster	2
<i>Sub-total</i>		12
Total		14

Not only Disraeli, but also the 1865 Parliament with the exception of the metropolitan Members and some regional Radicals, wanted London’s number of M.P.s to remain much as it was. This was due to a range of beliefs; jealousy no doubt, the feeling that London had so much already and was the centre of national life, its lack of a stern civic moralism and Nonconformist conscience, which greatly lessened its appeal to Midlands and Northern Liberals.⁹² Disraeli was singularly ill – informed about the capital politically, if not socially, there being no Tory M.P.s for London at the time of the 1867 – 8 Acts. Only in the City and Westminster did Tory candidates perform creditably in 1865 and no proper candidate stood for the party either for the county, or the other boroughs, at that election. The reasons were London’s assumed radicalism, the inevitable cost of standing and middle – class support for Palmerston. However, Disraeli needed the capital’s s backing for his 1867 Act so new seats would have to be

⁹¹ Viscount Mahon to Gerard Noel, n.d., Saturday?, 1868, H.P., Box 41/2, Ref. B/IX/G/67.
There was also a scribble which went:
“...there are too many Radicals in the Controller’s Office...” Mr. Moon, H.M. Dockyard, Deptford to Sir John Pakington, July 21st, 1868, H.P., Box 41/2, Ref. B/IX/G/8.
⁹² Its 1861 population figure was 2,206,485, which also included metropolitan Surrey.

created. The tacit deal struck was with Torrens's lodger franchise and the creation of new borough seats in both the east and west of the capital, at the expense of increased county representation for Middlesex.⁹³ This then allowed London's M.P.s to support the principle of borough household suffrage with a clear conscience.

Disraeli never admitted that a trick had been missed in 1867 - 8 over the capital. Party policy in the 1870s remained opposed to a separate Redistribution Bill as proposed by Dilke in 1873 and 1875, which would have hugely increased London's representation by making separate seats out of Battersea, Clapham, Kensington and Paddington, for example, because of its perceived effect on the counties. However, the genesis of "Villa Toryism" really began with the journeys taken by Disraeli and his wife in the autumn of 1872. He wrote:

"We take drives in the counties of Middlesex and Surrey...What surprises me, more than anything, is...the miles of villas which are throwing their antennae in every suburban direction".⁹⁴

If Lady Beaconsfield had suffered her last illness in 1867 - 8, rather than in 1872, matters might have been different. As it was, the final settlement to Middlesex was two, new, double member, borough constituencies in Chelsea (from the county seat) and Hackney (from half of Tower Hamlets). Middlesex itself was not divided.

⁹³ Disraeli's notes indicated that the subject was well researched. He wrote:

"...No statistics but numbers, except in metropolis, small. One year's residence in same lodgings...clear yearly value...unfurnished...£10...with allowance for rates and taxes...4/6 - 5/- p.w....claim to be made every year".

Lambert added:

"Without the lodger franchise there would be scarcely any additional enfranchisement in London, as there are, comparatively, so few houses of a less value than £10.

In London this franchise would enable a large number of working men to come on the register...

In the principal towns...it would be limited to...clerks in offices, shop men, professional men etc..."

July 19th, 1867, H.P., Box 48/2, Ref. B/XI/L/12.

⁹⁴ Disraeli to Hardy, September 16th, 1872, quoted in Monypenny and Buckle, op. cit., Book 5, Chapter vi., p. 565. A few lines later, he wrote (for the Queen):

"What miles of villas!...her faithful servant...investigated all parts of it [London] from Essex to Surrey, and Lady Beaconsfield calculated that from August 1st to the end of September she travelled 220 miles".

The mode of transport was, no doubt, generational. The more modern Rosebery hinted at the possibilities:

"Reform is the result of railways, and it produces the same effects - it must jumble up people". Lord Dalmeny to Disraeli, August 27th, 1867, H.P., Box 141/2, Ref. B/XXI/R/136.

The General Election results for the period were as follows:

		<u>1859</u>	<u>1865</u>	<u>1868</u>	<u>1874</u>	<u>1880</u>	<i>Sub-total</i>
	<u>County</u>	2L	2L*	1C,1L	2C	2C	5C,5L
	<u>Boroughs</u>						
1)	Chelsea	N/a	N/a	2L	1C,1L	2L	1C,5L
2)	City of London	4L*	4L	3L,1C	3C,1L	3C,1L	7C,13L
3)	Finsbury	2L	2L	2L	2L	2L	10L
4)	Hackney	N/a	N/a	2L	2L	2L	6L
5)	Marylebone	2L	2L	2L	1C,1L	2L	1C,9L
6)	Tower Hamlets	2L*	2L*	2L	1C,1L	1C,1L	2C,8L
7)	Westminster	2L*	2L	1C,1L	2C	2C	5C,5L
	<i>Sub-total</i>	12L	12L	2C,14L	8C,8L	6C,10L	16C,56L
	Totals	14L	14L	3C,15L	10C,8L	8C,10L	21C,61L

The transformation in the Tory position in Middlesex has been commented upon many times before. However, to go from no seats at all in 1865 to winning a majority just nine years later was rather remarkable. The railways and the growth of commuting clearly played a part, though it was, perhaps, more a development of the 1870s, than the 1860s. Most of the main line London termini had opened by the Second Reform Act, as had the first Underground line. The dates for their opening were:

Euston	1837
King's Cross	1852
Paddington	1854
Victoria	1862
Underground: Paddington to Faringdon	1863
St. Pancras	1868 ⁹⁵

National issues largely predominated, particularly in 1874, though specifically London concerns featured, especially in 1880.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ The later main termini were: Liverpool Street, 1874; Marylebone, 1899.

Within the first year of the Underground being opened, 11.8 million people had used it; see, Christian Wolmar, "Subterranean Railway: How the London Underground was Built and How it Changed the City Forever", 2004.

⁹⁶ "I hear something brewing in the Metropolitan Constituencies about the Water Bill". Sir George Bowyer to Disraeli, n.d., 1880, H.P., Box 119/3, Ref. B/XXI/B/789.

The County Seat

Middlesex’s electoral details were as follows:

Electorate	1859	15,171	Population ⁹⁷	1861	368,424
	1865	14,847 ⁹⁸		1871	276,028
	1868	25,196		1881	394,089
	1874	25,071			
	1880	29,949			

There had been no Tory M.P. for the constituency since 1847. Getting candidates to stand at all was no easy matter.⁹⁹ However, Lord George Hamilton’s topping of the poll in 1868 made it rather fashionable for young Tories to start looking at suburban and even urban seats, where a generation previously this would have been thought thoroughly foolhardy and wastefully expensive.¹⁰⁰ The extraordinary about turn came after two Liberals were returned without a contest in 1865 and after crushing Conservative defeats in 1857 – 9. Hamilton and his colleague O.E.Coope easily won both seats in 1874 – 80.

The creation of Chelsea altered the county seat’s complexion allowing the rural and suburban elements to predominate.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ The population decrease in the 1860s was due to the creation of Chelsea. The increase in the 1870s was for economic reasons.

⁹⁸ This figure included c.1,400 London freeholders and leaseholders who voted for the county M.P.s.

⁹⁹ “Middlesex, I fear, hangs fire. The person suggested is a “shabby lot”...Why does not Lord George [Hamilton] stand alone?” Disraeli to Rose, October 24th, 1868, H.P., Box 307/2, Ref. R/I/A/218d.

¹⁰⁰ Hamilton’s memoirs brilliantly convey the mode and manner of his selection but they also contain astute and sensible analysis of the political changes taking place in Middlesex. He wrote: “In the autumn of 1868 I was doing duty in London as junior ensign in the Coldstream Guards...I received one afternoon at the Guards’ Club a resolution...asking me to come forward as Conservative candidate for...Middlesex...I treated the matter as a practical joke...I then received a visit from Colonel Taylor...who told me that the offer was a serious one and that Disraeli wished me to fight the seat.

I was told that I was sure to get a big Protestant vote, there being in Middlesex a strong Low Church element...I went by appointment to see Disraeli...I felt all the time that he was trying to find out whether I had any wits or ideas. He then asked me how old I was. I answered: “Twenty-two”. “Really! You look about eighteen”.

My electoral success was due to the strange chance of my being selected for a constituency which...had during the past ten years been converted from Radicalism to Conservatism. Rapid extension of suburban railroads and the outpouring of professional men, tradesmen and clerical employees into the rural outskirts of London had steadily changed the tone and politics of the constituency...when Middlesex was cut up in 1885 into eight divisions [the Conservatives] won every seat by very large majorities”. Lord George Francis Hamilton: “Parliamentary Reminiscences 1868-85”, chapter 1, two volumes, 1916-22. Hamilton, 1845-1927; M.P. (Con.) 1868-85, Ealing 1885-1906; under-secretary, India 1874-8, vice-president, Committee of the Privy Council, Education 1878-80, First Lord of the Admiralty 1885-6 and 1886-92, Secretary of State, India 1895-1903.

¹⁰¹ The reduced alterations to Chelsea and the lack of change to Marylebone from those planned are both dealt with in the borough entries for Middlesex.

They were:

	Hundreds	Main Towns
1)	Edmonton	Enfield
2)	Elthorne	Uxbridge
3)	Gore	Edgware
		Harrow
4)	Isleworth	Brentford ¹⁰²
		Hounslow
5)	Ossulton	Acton
		Hampstead
		Highgate
6)	Spelthorne	Staines

Candidate selection was not the only difficulty faced by Disraeli in 1868, he also had to fill the Lord Lieutenancy and the obvious choice was one of the malcontents from the previous year. Such an appointment in a key county constituency was of crucial importance in election year.¹⁰³

In conclusion, the removal of Chelsea from Middlesex gave the Tories a gain of two M.P.s in the county.

The Borough Seats

The new South Middlesex seat comprised essentially Chelsea, Fulham, Hammersmith and Kensington. The boundaries on the east, north – east and south were Westminster, Marylebone and the Thames, respectively. In 1868 the Boundary Commission added the “thickly populated” suburb of Kensal Green, which was part of Willesden and a section of Chiswick, which included the eastern half of Turnham Green and Duke’s Avenue.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Brentford was the election centre for the county.

¹⁰³ “I was afraid that the Lord Lieutenancy of Middlesex would be an embarrassment to you...I cannot...hesitate a moment in declining, with many thanks, the offer which you have so unexpectedly made me...I have neither the local connexion with the County...nor the local knowledge...I had thought it probable that you would have offered it to the Duke of Northumberland, whose possession of Sion gives him a sufficient local standing...” Derby to Disraeli, April 14th, 1868, H.P., Box 110/3, Ref. B/XI/S/490.

“I must...tell you, that whilst I entertain no sort of hostility to the administration of which you are the head, I am determined for the future to pursue an outright independence of party...” Northumberland to Disraeli, April 18th, 1868, H.P., Box 138/1, Ref. B/XXI/N/194.

¹⁰⁴ This latter area contained 410 acres, 933 inhabited houses and a population of 6,000.

However, the Select Committee removed Chiswick, which subsequently remained in the county.¹⁰⁵

The constituency was, therefore, a Liberal gain, though one Tory M.P., W. Gordon, was elected in second place in 1874.¹⁰⁶

The electoral details were:

Electorate	1868	17,408	Population	1861	174,000
	1874	24,095		1871	258,050
	1880	30,951		1881	366,516

The City of London constituency was, with the university seats, the best example in 1867 of the Commons' desire to continue to represent "interests", as well as people. The resident population which exceeded 100,000 in the 1861 Census was in substantial decline by 1867, as was the electorate which had declined to 17,500 by the 1865 General Election, both situations being created by the railways and commuting. With 3, 297 firms of brokers in the City, the working population was approximately seven times the residential one. R.W.Crawford, one of the four Liberals returned in 1865, wanted the existing voting boundary of seven miles to be extended to twenty – five, in order to take in major commuting centres, such as Egham, Reigate, Sevenoaks, Welwyn and Windsor. However, he did not want the minority vote clause to be applied to the constituency, which was standard Liberal policy, but it was brought into the net of the twelve seats so affected by 252 – 188. The Tories hoped for some advantage from the new dispensation:

"Now we have a minority vote in the City, a man who will make the young clerks and people Churchmen will benefit both the party and the Church.

Besides these young men...become in time opulent merchants, turn landowners, and influence constituencies and neighbourhoods across the Kingdom. Besides, we want a Churchman there to balance the latitudinarian Stanley at Westminster. Liddon of Ch[rist]. Ch[urch]. is [such a] man...the greatest preacher of the day".¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ In answer to Spofforth's standard letter to the local agent about the proposed Select Committee contraction, the only comment made was:

"...so many Borough voters disfranchised".

Conservative agent for Chelsea to Spofforth, July 5th, 1868, H.P., Box 46/2, Ref. B/XI/H/4.

¹⁰⁶ Sir Charles Dilke was Liberal M.P. for Chelsea from 1868-86.

¹⁰⁷ Lord Powis to Corry, October 4th, 1868, H.P., Box 42/3, Ref. B/X/B/88.

Before 1868, the last Tory elected for the City was in 1852. Afterwards, the swing to the right was very marked, with the votes cast being:

	Conservative	Liberal
1868	18,242	24,988 ¹⁰⁸
1874	24,937	19,931
1880	30,856	17,530
Totals	74,035	62,449

As the City's parliamentary limits were already fixed by the surrounding constituencies, the Boundary Commission was precluded from considering any extension. The neighbouring seats were:

East	Tower Hamlets
North	Finsbury
West	Westminster ¹⁰⁹

The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	19,026	Population	1861	112,063
	1865	17,534		1871	74,897
	1868	20,185 ¹¹⁰		1881	50,526
	1874	22,916			
	1880	24,042			

Finsbury elected two Liberals at every General Election from 1835 – 80 inclusively. The Tory position certainly improved from 1868 – 80 but matters were never really close.¹¹¹ A local solicitor wrote:

“There are many Conservatives, I assure you...even in this most radical borough...

If Islington were [sic] made a borough of itself it would return 1, if not 2, Con[servative]s.”¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ The Liberals ran four candidates to the Tories' three in 1868, with both parties fielding three candidates each in 1874 – 80.

¹⁰⁹ The River Thames was the southern boundary.

¹¹⁰ The 1867 Act added only c. 200 resident, occupation electors to the total.

¹¹¹ The party's sole candidate gained 6,137 votes in 1868 and 12,800 in 1880; the electorate increased by a quarter over the same period. At the four General Elections of 1865 – 80 the Tories never had the same candidate. McCullagh Torrens was Liberal M.P. for Finsbury from 1865 – 85.

¹¹² Edmund Winter, Canonbury Villas, Islington to Disraeli, April 28th, 1866, H.P., Box 44/1, Ref. B/XI/D/41a.

The constituency profile was:

Electorate	1859	21,951	Population	1861	387,278
	1865	25,491		1871	452,484
	1868	31,759		1881	524,480
	1874	36,804			
	1880	43,756			

Situated directly north of the City, its main areas were Bloomsbury, Clerkenwell, Gray's Inn, Holborn, Islington, Lincoln's Inn and Stoke Newington. The Boundary Commission added Finsbury Park, constituting 160 houses and a population of 500.

The new borough of Hackney gave the Liberals their overall gain of two seats in Middlesex. It was the northern half of the old Tower Hamlets constituency and comprised Bethnal Green, Hackney itself and Shoreditch. Although the Tories never won in the three General Elections held under the Second Reform Acts, the change in the party's performance between 1868 – 74 was of interest:

	<u>Conservative vote</u>	<u>Liberal majority</u>
1868	2,633	9,610
1874	8,994	1,482 ¹¹³

Hackney's statistical profile was:

Electorate	1868	40,613	Population	1861	311,152
	1874	40,870		1871	362,378
	1880	44,723		1881	417,191

The one Tory victory in Marylebone came in 1874 when W. Forsyth topped the poll.¹¹⁴ The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	20,490	Population	1861	436,252
	1865	23,888		1871	477,532
	1868	35,575		1881	498,311
	1874	30,740			
	1880	33,920			

¹¹³ The Tory performance in 1868 is even worse than it appears. The Liberals ran 5 candidates, the sole Conservative was fourth and the majority is the difference between his performance and the winning, second – placed Liberal. In 1874, it is between second and third place, with only three candidates standing.

¹¹⁴ Hardy did not rate him, probably because he lost Bath in 1873, when expected to win the autumn by – election: see Diary, op. cit., for September – October, 1873. The previous Tory victory in Marylebone had been in 1838 with the candidate losing the seat in 1841.

The 1832 seat was made up of Marylebone itself, Paddington and St. Pancras. The Boundary Commission recommended adding Hampstead and Highgate from Hornsey and Belsize Park and Kilburn from Willesden. Ostensibly because of the effect the loss of the first two districts would have on the county population, reducing it to 151,000, but in practice because it would jeopardise their chances in Middlesex, the Liberal dominated Select Committee refused any alteration to the borough's boundaries. As noted earlier, this failed attempt at gerrymandering did not retain the county seat for the party.

Having lost Hackney, Tower Hamlets became much more marginal. No Tory had ever been elected for the constituency since its creation in 1832, when C.T.Ritchie topped the poll in 1874 and held on to come second in 1880.¹¹⁵ Tower Hamlets' details were:

Electorate	1859	28,843	Population	1861	647,845
	1865	34,115		1871	391,790
	1868	32,546		1881	438,910
	1874	32,937			
	1880	41,454			

The remaining southern half of the seat comprised Mile End, Poplar, St. George's, Stepney, the Tower of London and Whitechapel. As previously noted, there was no extension beyond the River Lea into Essex in order to incorporate either Stratford or West Ham.

¹¹⁵ O.E.Coope, Lord George Hamilton's victorious Middlesex colleague in 1874, had come within 403 votes of displacing the second Liberal in Tower Hamlets in 1868. It was this excellent performance, even though four Liberals stood for the two seats, which gained him the county nomination six years later.

The final Middlesex borough was Westminster. The Liberals had won both seats at all the General Elections from 1847 onwards until W.H.Smith’s famous triumph for the Conservatives in 1868.¹¹⁶

After that the party voting totals indicated the change in the constituency:

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>
1874	18,052	8,184
1880	18,023	13,007
Totals	36,075	21,191

The seat’s details were:

Electorate	1859	13,801	Population	1861	254,623
	1865	12,817		1871	246,606
	1868	18,879		1881	228,932
	1874	19,845			
	1880	21,081			

As Westminster was ringed by new, or existing, boroughs and natural barriers, there was no change to the boundaries. They were:

East	City of London
North	Marylebone
North East	Finsbury
South & South East	River Thames
West	Chelsea

In conclusion, the 1867-8 changes in Middlesex were as follows:

Conservative gains	2	Middlesex
Liberal gains	4	Chelsea, Hackney
Net Liberal gain	2	

¹¹⁶ Smith lost in 1865, when he was beaten into third place by 4,525 – 3,824. About this contest, he wrote:

“Seeing that I had not identified myself with the party, I confess I felt surprise at the warmth and earnestness with which the Westminster Conservatives supported me and the ready response to our united efforts caused me to be sanguine as to the result”. W.H.Smith to Disraeli, July 12th, 1865, H.P., Box 43/1, Ref. B/XXI/S/296.

Of the 1868 contest, Hardy wrote:

“I much pressed by Corry to preside at a great meeting tonight in Westminster. After thought and reference to Disraeli, declined. As Oxford candidate, Minister and especially Home Sec[retary]: I am better away...” Diary, op. cit., Friday, November 13th, 1868.

The 1874 double triumph inevitably owed something to local affairs. The party agent had written in 1870:

“This new Act will make the Government very unpopular in the metropolis and we may almost count on a second member for Westminster where the assessment committee’s action has been oppressive”. Spofforth to Disraeli, June 18th, 1870, H.P., Box 308/4, Ref. R/I/C/45a.

Surrey

The county possessed two distinct political parts: South London and its agricultural hinterland. The key redistribution issue for Disraeli was how to maximise latent Tory support by minimising the electoral stranglehold that the Eastern Division, traditionally one of the most Radical county constituencies in the whole country, exerted. The obvious way was to make Croydon (and adjoining Penge) a new borough, leaving the county situation to correct itself as a consequence. The better, more complicated and subtler option was to make a new, Mid Division, so long as the boundaries were drawn in the party's interest. Although it might, and probably is, claiming too great a degree of foresight on Disraeli's part, the "Kitchen Cabinet" closely analysed the 1865 General Election result in the Eastern Division and drew the correct conclusion that under railway and commuting influence, the suburban parts of the county were moving the same way politically as its metropolitan neighbours. The often commented upon, by – election triumph in 1871 was presaged in 1865. It was, of course, enjoyed to the full at the celebrated Crystal Palace meeting the following year. Disraeli enjoyed one piece of good fortune: the corrupt, Liberal, pocket borough of Reigate had already been disfranchised, thus freeing up at least one of the county's seats and as Surrey was severely under – represented, both before and after 1867 – 8, on grounds of population, rateable value and general taxation, the lost M.P. could safely be re – allocated within the county, without having to be switched to the North. The final settlement of four gains to the Tories made Surrey, after Devon, the most significant addition to Conservative support in the south of England.

The county's M.P.s were:

1832-67			1868-85		
<u>County</u>	<u>Division</u>	<u>Number of M.P.s</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Division</u>	<u>Number of M.P.s</u>
1)	Eastern	2	1)	Eastern	2
2)	Western	2	2)	Mid	2
			3)	Western	2
	<i>Sub-total</i>	4			6
<u>Boroughs</u>					
<u>Eastern</u>					
1)	Lambeth	2	1)	Lambeth	2
2)	Southwark	2	2)	Southwark	2
3)	Reigate	1			
	<i>Sub-total</i>	5			4
<u>Western</u>					
1)	Guildford	2	1)	Guildford	1
<u>Borough</u>	<i>Sub-total</i>	7			5
Totals		11			11

Surrey's General Election results for 1859 – 80 were as follows:

		<u>1859</u>	<u>1865</u>	<u>1868</u>	<u>1874</u>	<u>1880</u>	<i>Sub-total</i>
	<u>Counties</u>						
1)	Eastern	2L	2L	2L	2C	2C	4C,6L
2)	Mid	N/a	N/a	2C	2C*	2C	6C
3)	Western	1C,1L*	1C,1L*	1C,1L	2C*	2C*	7C,3L
	<i>Sub-total</i>	1C,3L	1C,3L	3C,3L	6C	6C	17C,9L
	<u>Boroughs</u>						
1)	Guildford (W)	1C,1L*	1C,1L	1L	1C	1C	4C,3L
2)	Lambeth (E)	2L*	2L	2L	2L	2L	10L
3)	Reigate (E)	1L	1L	N/a	N/a	N/a	2L
4)	Southwark (E)	2L	2L*	2L	1C,1L	2L	1C,9L
	<i>Sub-total</i>	1C,6L	1C,6L	5L	2C,3L	1C,4L	5C,24L
	Totals	2C,9L	2C,9L	3C,8L	8C,3L	7C,4L	22C,33L

The County Seats

The Eastern Division had returned two Liberals since 1847. It was the smaller, much the more heavily populated and the most politically interesting of the two Surrey county seats established in 1832. Excluding the represented boroughs, it included the Hundreds of Brixton, Kingston, Reigate, Tandridge and Wallington. The big population growths were in Croydon, the Division's electoral capital, and

Battersea.¹¹⁷ The original planning of creating Croydon as a borough, thus taking it out of East Surrey, meant that the concern was over the Mid Division and how that could be saved from Radical swamping. A correspondent wrote in detail about the first scheme as follows:

“These remarks are made upon the supposition that East Surrey, as proposed, will be irretrievably Liberal considering the number of Metropolitan Districts, and Battersea I consider is essentially Liberal also. I think, then, if altered as proposed, East Surrey would represent the commercial interests of the County and Mid Surrey the agricultural and rural interests and therefore...we could not fail to return Conservative men”.¹¹⁸

However, the original scheme was dropped because of more pressing northern claims. It was taken for granted that this would leave the Eastern seat as irredeemably radical, with Croydon and its population of c.45,000 dominating but it did not appear ideal in the new Mid Division as well because Battersea/Wandsworth was to be a key part of it. The proposed new Eastern constituency incorporated the existing South London boroughs, half of Brixton, Croydon and Tandridge Hundred.¹¹⁹ However, the

¹¹⁷ Sometimes Battersea was referred to, slightly erroneously, as Wandsworth. Disraeli's own jottings showed that he accepted the case for increasing East Surrey's representation:

“East Surrey, with its borough populations, amounts to 707,796 and if we leave it with only 7 Members as at present, there will be 1:101,000 [compared with]:

Cambridgeshire	1:34,600
Oxfordshire	1:23,000
Berkshire	1:22,000
Buckinghamshire	1:21,000
Herefordshire	1:20,000
Dorset	1:17,000”

Disraeli's notes, n.d., H.P., Box 48/1, B/XI/K/15.

¹¹⁸ The rest of the advice ran:

“You will observe the remarkable increase of Battersea in comparison to other Districts, either in proposed Mid, or East, Surrey and it would be of considerable importance if this particular place were thrown into East Surrey and Croydon, in lieu thereof, thrown into Mid Surrey. As it is proposed to give Croydon and Penge a Member, the increase of County voters there will not be great, whilst Battersea having no Member, every vote will be thrown into the County.

Reigate may then be disfranchised although this will be the means of throwing their entire vote into the County but I think other portions of proposed Mid Surrey would out-number the accession.

In going thro' the Assessments I find the increase of votes for Reigate alone under the £15 rating occupation franchise will be nearly 800, instead of 300, as now registered. It therefore seems necessary that no place like Battersea should be thrown into Mid Surrey”.

Mr. Merrick Head to Spofforth, from Reigate, Surrey, May 21st, 1867, H.P., Box 45/3.

¹¹⁹ The old, pre-1868, electorate was made up as follows: Camberwell 1,115, Croydon and Penge 887 (including parish out voters), Godstone 328, Lambeth 2,081, Mid-Surrey residents qualified in the Eastern Division 41 and Southwark 1,091: total 5,543. The capital was Croydon. Disraeli's notes, n.d., H.P., Box 48/1, Ref. B/XI/K/121.

Boundary Commission then proposed a large increase in the Lambeth boundaries, which was called in by the Select Committee in 1868. The local agent was delighted by the subsequent decision of the Liberal dominated body to veto any increase to the borough's boundaries.¹²⁰ The agent was percipient. In 1871 Derby wrote:

"The papers are full of the East Surrey election, which on all sides they regard as significant, no Conservative having sat for that district since 1841".¹²¹

The relevant party voting figures for this great county constituency, both before and after 1867 -8, indicated what had taken place:

	<u>1865</u>	<u>1868</u>	<u>1871 (August)</u>	<u>1874</u>	<u>1880</u>
<i>Conservative</i>	6,559	6,996	3,912	11,252	16,110
<i>Liberal</i>	6,919	8,103	2,749	8,307	11,906
Majority	L360	L1,107	C1,163	C2,945	C4,204

In fifteen years, a seat famous for its radicalism had become a Conservative stronghold after losing its most agricultural and rural parts. East Surrey's electoral details were:

Electorate	1859	7,350	Population	1861	209,345 ¹²²
	1865	9,913		1871	154,566
	1868	10,932		1881	225,914
	1874	14,468			
	1880	18,969			

¹²⁰ Interestingly, this was the only county report out of 23 which was submitted, or possibly, though unlikely, the only one which has survived. He wrote:

"The contraction of the borough limits of Lambeth from those proposed by the Boundary Commission will be highly serviceable to the Conservative interest in the County.

The [Boundary] Commission proposed the addition of the entire parish of Clapham, a considerable part of Streatham and a considerable part of the parish of Lambeth formerly not included in the limits of the Borough and these districts, which the Commission proposed to add, would have deprived a large section of the Conservatives of their County votes, and...made a considerable loss to us, nor do I believe the absorption of them into the Borough would have furthered the Conservatives in any way.

The report...of the select Committee will be more useful to us than that of the Boundary Commission". Mr. Chevallier, East Surrey Conservative registration agent to Spofforth, July 5th, 1868, H.P., Box 46/2, Ref. B/XI/H/4.

¹²¹ Derby Diary, op. cit., August 26th, 1871. The Conservatives won by 3,912-2,749, majority 1,163. In 1868 the Liberal majority for the second seat had been 384. In 1868 a prospective candidate had written about the seat as follows:

"...I can hardly bring myself to believe that any Conservative has the smallest chance in East Surrey... the new East Surrey must be more Radical than the old.

...I am...a total stranger there; and though Eldon's happening to possess a house and small estate near Croydon might furnish me with an excuse...his influence in the Division must be very small indeed". T.F.Fremantle to Corry, September 21st, 1868, H.P., Box 41/2, Ref. B/IX/G/16.

¹²² The divided figure, as per 1867, was 97,734.

The new, Mid Surrey seat was the western half of the pre – 1867, undivided, Eastern Division. It included Battersea and Wandsworth, Roehampton, the seat of the elder Derby's villa, half of the Wallington Hundred and Reigate.¹²³ The Conservatives never really had much difficulty with the new constituency as the party voting totals indicated:

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>
1868	8,899	6,242
1880	16,778	11,497
June 1884	7,645	4,949
Totals	33,322	22,688

Stanley had written about the northern part of the seat in 1867:

“Not even London itself gives a stranger such an idea of English wealth as the multitude of villas round Wimbledon, Putney, Richmond etc.”¹²⁴

The great diarist commented further about the constituency in 1875:

“Disraeli was in high spirits, as he has reason to be: the promotion of Baggallay [Conservative Solicitor – General] to be a judge has vacated Mid – Surrey, a large and formerly very democratic constituency: but though they have tried hard, the Liberals can find no one to contest the seat”.¹²⁵

The new constituency's details were:

Electorate	1868	10,565 ¹²⁶	Population	1861	111,611 ¹²⁷
	1874	14,645		1871	203,347
	1880	18,879		1881	309,891

¹²³ On July 12th, 1867 A.S. Ayrton had proposed making Wandsworth a new constituency at the expense of Darlington. The new division's capital was Kingston.

¹²⁴ Diary, op. cit., April 24th, 1867.

A year later this view was reinforced by the house builder and Tory M.P. Cubitt, who wrote:

“Brodrick is very sanguine and I think with reason about Mid Surrey”. G.Cubitt to Corry, September 25th, 1868, H.P., Box 41/2, Ref. B/IX/G/17. For Cubitt's details, see Surrey, West. William Brodrick Middleton, succ. as 8th Viscount Midleton, 1870, was Tory M.P. for the constituency, 1868-70 and had contested and lost East Surrey in 1865. He owned 3,105 acres at Godalming.

¹²⁵ The Conservatives were returned unopposed in November, 1875. Derby Diaries, op. cit., November 3rd, 1875.

¹²⁶ The pre-1868 voting districts were: Croydon (the parts of the district lying in Mid Surrey) 610, other East Surrey residents qualified for the Mid Division 320, Kingston 999, Reigate 649, Richmond 641 and Wandsworth 2,068: total 5,287.

¹²⁷ Exclusive of Reigate.

By comparison, the Western Division of the county was rather simpler to comprehend.¹²⁸ The representation was shared between the two parties from 1857 – 74, when the Conservatives won both seats and then retained them in 1880.¹²⁹ The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	3,958	Population	1861	109,546
	1865	4,081		1871	128,781
	1868	6,708		1881	151,132
	1874	7,314			
	1880	7,689			

East Surrey Boroughs

Lambeth returned two Liberals at every General Election from 1832 – 80 inclusively. Apart from the question of the boundaries, the other area of interest was the rather notable rise in the Tory vote, which was urban “Tory Democracy” writ large. The relevant figures for the 1868 – 80 period were:

Year	Conservative vote	Liberal majority ¹³⁰
1868	7,043	7,510
1874	11,201	587
1880	16,701	2,282

The surviving correspondence gives some insight into the state of affairs in the constituency:

“1st. Lambeth...is and always has been a place where party feelings (although democratic) run very high, consequently the leaders of each party look very sharp after the interest of their followers in qualifying them to vote...at the present time there are 2 parties (altho’ both profess the same political opinion) ready to contest the Boro[ugh] should an opportunity occur.

¹²⁸ It ran from Chertsey in the north to Haslemere in the south and from Farnham in the west to Dorking and Epsom in the east. The divisional capital was Guildford.

¹²⁹ The only contest at the five General Elections from 1859-80 was in 1868 when the Liberals failed, by a large margin, to get their second candidate elected. The relevant voting figures were: Conservative 3,000; Liberal 1,757.

George Cubitt, cr. 1st Baron Ashcombe, 1892; 1828-1917; M.P. (Con.) West Surrey 1860-85, Epsom 1885-92; 2nd Church Estates Commissioner 1874-9.

The leading landowners were:

6th Earl of Egmont, 1794-1874, owned 3,500 acres at Epsom; 1st Earl of Lovelace, Liberal, owned 10,000 acres at Leatherhead and the 3rd Earl of Onslow, 1777-1870, Conservative, who owned 12,000 acres at Guildford.

¹³⁰ The majority, in each case, is for the winning, second-placed, Liberal candidate over the losing, third-placed Conservative one.

2ndly Camberwell...is just the reverse, they carry on matters much more quiet in the parish, and although[ugh] a great portion of the Parish is in the Boro[ugh], the feeling generally is far more Conservative...”¹³¹

The constituency included Camberwell, Kennington, Lambeth itself, Vauxhall and Walworth. The Boundary Commission proposed adding Brixton, Clapham, the rest of Lambeth and Streatham, all of which would come out of both the old, and new, East Surrey constituency. The population increase was estimated at 57,000. The effect that this would have on the county seat gave the Select Committee its official, rather than real, reason to veto the changes and to keep Lambeth within its existing limits. The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	21,737	Population	1861	294,883
	1865	27,754		1871	379,048
	1868	33,377		1881	498,697
	1874	40,103			
	1880	50,541			

Southwark elected two Liberals at every General Election from 1832 – 68 inclusively and then again in 1880. On three separate occasions between 1870 – 80, when the Liberal vote was split, the Tories won two by – elections and the second seat in 1874.

The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	10,606	Population	1861	193,593
	1865	11,646		1871	208,725
	1868	17,703		1881	221,866
	1874	20,419			
	1880	22,839			

Mid Surrey Borough

Reigate was a corrupt Liberal pocket borough which was rightly disfranchised in 1865. The Tories last success was in 1852, the Liberals then winning all three of the Palmerstonian contests from 1857 – 65, plus three by – elections, two in 1858 and one in 1863. No Conservative stood between 1852 – 65 when the then candidate won eleven votes. The Rose Papers contain a note about the constituency’s affairs:

¹³¹ R. Turner to Disraeli, March 21st, 1867, from Clapham, H.P., Box 47/1, Ref. B/XI/J/99b.

“The Conservatives cannot return their own man at Reigate but they can turn the scale and our party have unanimously adopted Monson”.¹³² The seat’s details were:

Electorate	1859	548	Population	1861	9,975
	1865	926			

West Surrey Borough

Guildford lost its second seat under the Laing Amendment. The parties had shared matters from 1857 – 65, the Tories then won a contested by – election in 1866, lost the 1868 General Election but easily won the remaining two contests. The party voting totals during the lifetime of the 1867 – 8 Acts meant that the lost seat was at the Liberals’ expense:

Conservative	Liberal
1,893	1,537

The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	677	Population	1861	8,020
	1865	725		1871	9,801
	1868	1,220		1881	11,593
	1874	1,306			
	1880	1,451			

The boundary changes were minor but do not seem to have harmed the Tory cause.¹³³

¹³² Rose to Disraeli, August 12th, 1858, H.P., Box 307/1, Ref. R/I/B/43a. Monson, later Lord Monson, 1863, was Liberal M.P. for Reigate from October 1858-February 1863. The general idea was that the Tories supported the least reprehensible, or presumably most Palmerstonian, candidate in such a constituency where their own chances were minimal and no one would stand.

¹³³ They were extended both eastwards and southwards. In the East, 14 houses were added, which were adjacent to the workhouse and presumably voted Liberal, whilst in the South, 49 properties with a population of 230 on the Portsmouth Road were incorporated, a likely example of nascent Villa Toryism.

The Tory Member in the Reform Parliament was Sir Richard Garth, 1820 -1903, M.P. Guildford December 1866-8; Chief Justice, Bengal 1875-6.

Sussex

The county's constituency profile was as follows:

<u>Eastern Division</u>		<u>Number of M.P.s</u>	<u>Western Division</u>		<u>Number of M.P.s</u>
<u>County</u>		2	<u>County</u>		2
<u>Boroughs</u>			<u>Boroughs</u>		
1)	Brighton	2	1)	Chichester	2
2)	Hastings	2	2)	Shoreham	2
3)	Lewes	2	3)	Arundel	1
4)	Rye	1	4)	Horsham	1
	<i>Sub-total</i>	7	5)	Midhurst	1
				<i>Sub-total</i>	7
	Total	9		Total	9

No additions were made in 1867 – 8 but three borough M.P.s were lost. They were in Arundel, Chichester and Lewes. The last two were due to Laing's Amendment, the first one to Scottish requirements in 1868. From then until 1885, therefore, the county had fifteen M.P.s, four county and eleven borough, with seven in East, and eight in West, Sussex. Arundel and Chichester were clear Liberal losses and Lewes, too, with rather more circumspection, ought to be regarded in the same light. The county gives clear evidence that the small boroughs were by no means overwhelmingly Tory.

The General Election results for Sussex from 1859 – 80 were:

	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>1859</u>	<u>1865</u>	<u>1868</u>	<u>1874</u>	<u>1880</u>	<i>Sub-total</i>
	<u>County</u>						
1)	Eastern	1C,1L*	2L	1C,1L	2C*	2C	6C,4L
2)	Western	2C*	2C*	2C*	2C*	2C*	10C
	<i>Sub-total</i>	3C,1L	2C,2L	3C,1L	4C	4C	16C,4L
	<u>Borough</u>						
1)	Arundel (West)	1L*	1L*	N/a	N/a	N/a	2L
2)	Brighton (East)	2L	2L	2L	2C	2L	2C,8L
3)	Chichester (West)	1C,1L	1C,1L*	1C	1C*	1C	5C,2L
4)	Hastings (East)	2L	1C,1L	2L	2L	1C,1L	2C,8L
5)	Horsham (West)	1C*	1L	1L	1C	1C	3C,2L
6)	Lewes (East)	2L	2L	1L	1C	1C	2C,5L
7)	Midhurst (West)	1C*	1C*	1C	1C	1C	5C
8)	Rye (East)	1L*	1L	1C	1C	1L	2C,3L
9)	Shoreham (West)	2C*	2C	2C*	2C	2C	10C
	<i>Sub-total</i>	5C,9L	5C,9L	5C,6L	9C,2L	7C,4L	31C,30L
	Totals	8C,10L	7C,11L	8C,7L	13C,2L	11C,4L	47C,34L

The divisional totals were:

	<u>1859-65</u>	<u>1868-80</u>
<u>County</u>		
East	1C,3L	5C,1L
West	4C	6C
<i>Sub-total</i>	5C,3L	11C,1L
<u>Borough</u>		
East	1C,13L	7C,11L
West	9C,5L	14C,1L
<i>Sub-total</i>	10C,18L	21C,12L
Totals	15C,21L	32C,13L

Although the county as a whole was one step removed from the more metropolitan areas, such South Essex, Middlesex, East Surrey and West Kent, the same, or similar, processes were at work, especially in the Eastern Division, which was more reflective of public opinion, because of its greater diversity and population. The figures were:

	<u>1859-65</u>	<u>1868-80</u>
East	2C,16L	12C,12L
West	13C,5L	20C,1L

The disfranchisement of 1868 accentuated the movement against the Liberals but it did not wholly account for it. Tory strength was overwhelming in West Sussex, Midhurst and Shoreham and strong in Chichester. Proprietorial interest, agriculture, the shipping interest and the Church of England explain this state of affairs. Liberal support lay in the rotten borough of Arundel, in the great and fashionable centres of Brighton and Hastings, both created as parliamentary seats in 1832, and at the county seat of Lewes, all of them in the East with the exception of the first. As with every spa, holiday resort and place of leisure and pleasure, the class, cultural, economic and religious distinctions between the resident poor and the indigent and transient rich and wealthy, created a strong radicalism in both Brighton and Hastings. The key redistribution issue was to try and remove as many suburban voters as possible from marginal East Sussex by expanding the boundaries of the two seaside resorts. The Boundary Commission reports for Sussex indicated the difference between the semi-vibrant Eastern Division and the Sleepy Hollow Western one:

	<u>Increased</u>	<u>No change</u>
Eastern Division	3 (Brighton, Hastings, Lewes)	1 (Rye)
Western Division	1 (Chichester)	4 (Arundel: abolished 1868; Horsham, Midhurst, Shoreham)

Horsham and Rye were also closely contested constituencies, taking the period as a whole, but clearly came to prefer the Conservatives. The overall gain of three seats for the Tories in Sussex, therefore, as a consequence of 1867 – 8 was due mainly, not to county enfranchisement, but to borough disfranchisement.

The County Divisions

East Sussex saw its representation shared at the General Elections of 1857 – 9 and then again in 1868. The Liberals won both seats in 1865, the only time this happened in the Division's existence after the 1830s. The rise in Tory fortunes culminated in the double triumphs of 1874 – 80, when the party returned two M.P.s in 1874, without a contest. The voting figures in the three relevant elections indicated the political change:

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Majority</u>
1865	4,779	5,468	L689
1868	7,141	7,081	C60
1880	8,922	5,845	C3,077
Totals	20,842	18,394	C2,448

The defeat in 1865 was explained to the party leadership, a year later, as essentially a franchise issue.¹³⁴

¹³⁴ "...every 1,000 rural occupiers diminish the influence of the 100,000 borough freeholders, e.g. East Sussex was carried against us at the last election solely by the Brighton freeholders. In every other polling district the Conservatives had a majority. By this Bill [1866] East Sussex will register 60% of 2,700 £14 - £50 occupiers, of whom only 281 (those at Eastbourne) are in a town above 5,000 population and we shall carry any election to a certainty". R.D.Baxter to Derby, June 12th, 1866, H.P., Box 44/1, Ref. B/XI/D/74.

A slightly earlier note from the same source, this time to Disraeli, said:

"...Caleb Diplock, large brewer and wine importer in Eastbourne..." May 19th, 1866, H.P., Box 44/1, Ref. B/XI/D/61.

A letter the next year stressed, again, the over-riding issue of the forthcoming contest in 1868.¹³⁵

The Weald and the small towns such as Newhaven and Seaford were Liberal centres whilst Tory strength lay in the agricultural areas. There was an obvious political contrast between Brighton and Eastbourne. Both parties could count on the support of major landowners, with Lewes being the divisional capital.¹³⁶ The seat's details were:

Electorate	1859	6,401	Population	1861	126,234
	1865	6,670		1871	139,170
	1868	9,380		1881	162,494
	1874	10,141			
	1880	10,098			

The politics of the Western seat were rather moribund by comparison. The only contest throughout the constituency's existence was in 1837. From 1841–80 two Conservatives were continuously returned. The tiny electorate, for a county, militated against any contest. However, even in such a seat matters were not always entirely straightforward, with local Anglican Church appointments exercising Disraeli's great friend from the 1850s.¹³⁷ The statistical details were:

¹³⁵ "I have lately been visiting in...[East Sussex] and have been much alarmed at the unsatisfactory feelings current amongst persons who, in former years, have been energetic supporters of our party.

They seem to think that their leaders have thrown them over as to the Reform Bill and will do so again as to Church questions...the urgency of the case is altogether misunderstood by great numbers of Conservatives outside the House...that...section who are unable to appreciate the magnitude of the risk attaching to inaction and the general nature of parliamentary tactics...an appeal to the gentlemen of England to rouse themselves from apathy and inaction". George F. Chandler to Disraeli, August 31st, 1867, H.P., Box 47/2, Ref. B/XI/J/175.

¹³⁶ For the Conservatives: William Nevill, 5th Earl and 1st Marquis of Abergavenny, cr. 1876; 1826 – 1915; owned 15,000 acres in the Division, though his seat was Eridge Castle, Tunbridge Wells, Kent; Charles Richard Sackville-West, 6th Earl De La Warr, owned 17,000 acres in Sussex, though his seat, too, was in Kent at Buckhurst Park, Tunbridge Wells. The main Liberal landowner was Henry Thomas Pelham, 3rd Earl of Chichester, 1804 – 86, head of the Church Estates Commission, 1850 – 78; owned 16,000 acres at Stanmer, Lewes. John George Dodson, cr. 1st Baron Monk – Bretton, 1884; 1825-97; M.P. (Lib.) East Sussex 1857 – 74, Chester 1874-80, Scarborough 1880-4; Deputy Speaker, Commons, 1865 – 72; Financial Secretary, Treasury 1873-4, President of the Local Government Board 1880-2, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 1882-4; owned 3,000 acres near Lewes.

Out – voting took place at Battle, East Grinstead and Mayfield.

¹³⁷ "Both in West Sussex and in the Rape of Bramber, a seat which has cost much money, the clerical patronage has been bestowed, in a manner, very prejudicial[ly] to the interests of the Gov[ernmen]t...the choice of clergy in these small parishes is very important, as the...voters to be created would infallibly follow the lead of their parson".

Lord Chelmsford had given Goodwood to a curate who:

"...had distinguished himself by preaching practical sermons against the Goodwood races, of which...my father is the patron...[he] has no interest or influence with the present Government". Lord Henry Gordon – Lennox to Disraeli, December 27th, 1858, H.P., Box 102/2, Ref. B/XX/Lx./122.

Electorate	1859	2,853	Population	1861	53,025
	1865	2,607		1871	60,526
	1868	3,672		1881	63,230
	1874	3,865			
	1880	3,869			

The election centre was Chichester. Both parties had major families behind them and the Tory M.P.s in the Reform Parliament were W.B.Barttelot and Henry Wyndham, better known as Lord Leconfield.¹³⁸

East Sussex Boroughs

The Conservatives won both Brighton seats in 1874 only, with there being by-election victories of a sort in 1864 and 1884.¹³⁹ The Liberals returned both Members at the General Elections from 1857-68 inclusively and the voting figures for London's pleasure and seaside centre suggest that "Tory Democracy" played well on, at least a part of, the South Coast:

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>
1868	4,149	6,855 ¹⁴⁰
1874	8,388	6,481
1880	9,403	9,817
Totals	21,940	23,153

As so often was the case with the large constituencies, the margins of both victory and defeat were very small. The Conservative cause was in no way harmed by the addition of the suburb of Prestonville, to the north of the existing borough, consisting of 228 houses, 1,100 people and a cavalry barracks. Brighton's M.P.s in the Reform

¹³⁸ The other county polling places were: Horsham, Petworth and Steyning.

Sir Walter Barttelot Barttelot, knighted 1875; 1820-93; M.P. (Con.) West Sussex 1860-85, Horsham 1885-93; campaigner against the malt tax; owned 5,000 acres at Pulborough.

Henry Wyndham, 2nd Baron Leconfield, succ. 1869; M.P. (Con.) West Sussex 1854-69; owned 30,000 acres at Petworth.

Henry Fitzalan-Howard, 15th Duke of Norfolk, succ. 1860; 1847-1917; Liberal; owned 21,500 acres at Arundel Castle.

Charles Henry Gordon-Lennox, 6th Duke of Richmond and Gordon, succ. 1860; 1818-1903; M.P. (Con.) West Sussex, 1841-60; President, Board of Trade 1867-8 & June-August 1885, Lord President of the Council 1874-80, Secretary of State, Scotland 1885-6; chairman, Commission on Agricultural Depression, 1879-82; Conservative leader, House of Lords, 1870-6; "The Farmers' Friend".

¹³⁹ In 1864 three Liberal candidates, plus an Independent, split the anti-Tory vote and in 1884 the sitting Liberal M.P., W.T.Marriott, changed parties due to the Government's Egyptian and Sudanese policy and sought re-election as a Conservative.

¹⁴⁰ A third, Liberal, candidate gained 432 votes and it is assumed that if he had not stood, then this figure would have been added to those of the official party candidates.

Parliament were as independent-minded as could be: Henry Fawcett and Disraeli's friend, James White.¹⁴¹ The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	4,277	Population	1861	87,317
	1865	6,352		1871	103,758
	1868	8,661		1881	128,440
	1874	10,228			
	1880	12,124			

The major Cinque Port and holiday resort of Hastings, the advent of the railway making it a haven for both pleasure-seekers and invalids, was really a Liberal seat, an ex-Treasury borough, with Tory interludes. The Tory inroads at Brighton were not really repeated at Hastings. It was substantially smaller, more difficult to get to, there was a major, local, Liberal family, the boundary changes were more extensive and anti-Tory and Nonconformity was well represented in the borough.¹⁴² Between 1859-80 the former party returned both Members in 1859, 1868 and, unusually, 1874. The Conservatives just managed to gain the second seat by a majority of 9 in 1865 and headed the poll in 1880 with a larger majority over the third-placed Liberal of 171¹⁴³. The initial boundary changes made the town very much more radical: the three northern suburbs of Fairlight Down, Silverdale and Tivoli totalling 748 houses, with a population of 3,740 were all added. Hastings was then referred to the Select Committee in 1868, which then reduced the proposed new boundaries by approximately one third, leaving out the more agricultural areas. This pleased the local Tory agent who wrote:

"I am strongly of opinion that the proposed reduction will be favourable to Conservative interests in this Borough".¹⁴⁴

As the Tories lost the second East Sussex seat by only 51 votes in 1868, the Liberal alteration to the original plans was, to some extent, significant. However, as the

¹⁴¹ James White; 1809-83; M.P. (Lib.) Plymouth 1857-9, Brighton 1860-74; defeated Plymouth 1859, Brighton 1874; London merchant, China trade; alderman, City of London 1835-41.

¹⁴² Sir Thomas Brassey, knighted 1881, 1st Baron Brassey, 1886; 1836-1918; M.P. (Lib.) Devonport June-July 1865, Hastings 1868-86; defeated Birkenhead 1861, Devonport 1865, Sandwich 1866, Liverpool, Abercromby and St. Andrews' District, 1886; railway contractor; owned 3,500 acres at Normanhurst, Battle. The Index to the Hardy Diary, op. cit., is incorrect over Brassey's situation in the 1865-8 Parliament.

¹⁴³ There were also contested Liberal by-election triumphs in 1864, 1869 and 1883. The victories were close run affairs with respective majorities of 29, 134 and 37.

¹⁴⁴ Frederick Langham, Conservative agent, Hastings to Spofforth, July 5th, 1868, H.P., Box 46/2, Ref. B/XI/H/4. Tivoli was a residential suburb of 150 houses whilst Fairlight Down was described in the original Report as comprising "cottages and small houses...connected with the trade of Hastings...artisans employed in the town".

Conservatives won both county seats unopposed in 1874 and had a majority of 1,414 for the second Member in 1880, perhaps too much should not be made of it. The Tory M.P. in the Reform Parliament was P.F.Robertson.¹⁴⁵ The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	1,235	Population	1861	22,910
	1865	1,941		1871	33,337
	1868	2,832		1881	47,638
	1874	3,082			
	1880	3,899			

The divisional capital of Lewes had been a Palmerstonian stronghold returning two Liberals at the General Elections of 1857-65 inclusively and still returning the remaining single M.P. for the party in 1868.¹⁴⁶ Then the swing took place and the seat was gone. The voting totals show the movement:

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Majority</u>
1859	389	677	L288
1865	524	649	L125
1868	587	601	L14
1874	772	500	C272
1880	717	580	C137
Totals	2,989	3,007	

The small boundary changes on both the northern and north-western sides of the borough saw extensions *into* Kingston and South Malling: they were not electorally significant. The constituency details were as follows:

Electorate	1859	697	Population	1861	9,716
	1865	720		1871	10,753
	1868	1,344		1881	11,199
	1874	1,430			
	1880	1,462			

¹⁴⁵ Patrick Francis Robertson; M.P. (Con.) Hastings 1852-9 and 1865-8; defeated for same: 1847, 1859, 1864, 1869 and 1874.
¹⁴⁶ Disraeli had no correspondence over the borough. W.L.Christie, M.P. (Con.) Lewes, 1874-85, defeated for same 1865-8.

The ancient Cinque Port of Rye was a Liberal seat from 1841-68. In that year Hardy's eldest son, Stewart, won it and held on until 1880, when he lost by 8 votes.¹⁴⁷ There were no boundary changes. The constituency details were:

Electorate	1859	470	Population	1861	8,202
	1865	392		1871	8,290
	1868	1,153		1881	8,409
	1874	1,287			
	1880	1,364			

West Sussex Boroughs

Arundel was the Roman Catholic pocket borough of the Liberal Duke of Norfolk. By population, it was England's smallest seat. No Conservative stood during the 1832-68 period. Disraeli's need to satisfy Scottish requirements in 1868 ended its parliamentary existence. However, because the whole notion of a separate Catholic constituency fitted in so well to the thinking of both the 1865 Parliament, and to Disraeli's, over the representation of communities, interests and minorities, the possibility of extending the borough in order to incorporate Littlehampton and thereby to make it viable was discussed by the Boundary Commission. Littlehampton, with 650 houses and a population of 3,000 was a new seaside resort, as well as being an old port. However, no recommendation for any increase was eventually made. Arundel's details were:

Electorate	1859	196	Population	1861	2,498
	1865	174			

Chichester's representation had been split from 1841-65 inclusively, with only one contest in 1859 giving much idea about the state of the parties. The Liberals then lost all three General Elections from 1868-80, with the only contests indicating the swing to the Conservatives:

¹⁴⁷ Hardy wrote about the constituency as follows:
“...Stewart gives not a bad account of Rye but fears that money is at work on the other side as it has been at all Elections. Men discontented by non-payment at [the] last election have become content and earnest for [W.J.] Loyd [the Liberal candidate]. If he [Stewart] loses he must do it with clean hands but I never had much faith in beating the Radicals if they resorted to the old tactics...”
Diary, op. cit. Monday, October 19th, 1868.
John Stewart Gathorne-Hardy, 2nd Earl of Cranbrook, 1906; 1839-1911; M.P. (Con.) Rye 1868-80, Mid-Kent 1884-5, Medway 1884-92. The family seat was just over the border of the River Rother at Benenden, Kent.

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Con. majority</u>
1868	603	433	170
1880	602	467	135

The loss of the second seat, therefore, was at the Liberals' expense. Disraeli was kept well informed about the constituency as Henry Lennox was one of the town's M.P.s for almost 40 years. He wrote:

"...in 1859 I only saved my seat from the 2nd Radical by 3 votes. Mr. Smith proposed to add Bognor, Littlehampton and Arundel. The first two are small watering places having no possible connection with my family but probably like other watering places being very radical – Littlehampton...is in addition close to, and partly owned by, the ducal house of Norfolk. Arundel is his Grace's pocket borough. No Conservative is to be found in its limits and it has returned a Whig since first it was registered in the Parliamentary Roll."¹⁴⁸

There was no contest in 1865 but with only one vacancy three years later, new concerns were raised:

"Chichester has been for 12 months past, and still is, distracted by violent dissensions as to sanitary changes and a new site for their (sic.) Cattle Market...the opinion of my agents that, unless for a considerable rise, it would be most unwise to vacate my seat".¹⁴⁹

Lennox's peace of mind would not have been helped by the Boundary Commission which added the eastern suburb of Wickham to the borough, consisting of 222 houses and 1,100 people, "artisans...employed in Chichester".¹⁵⁰

Five years later, Lennox still felt that there were major local difficulties which threatened him:

"I am rather uneasy about my seat...the internecine war that has been waging in Chichester, since last April about the new water supply company...matters were made worse...by an impudent proposal to place the new water tank at the top of our beautiful but rickety old campanile. The proposal...is supported by the Dean, by all the Radical and Dissenting party. It is opposed by the rest of the clergy and by a large

¹⁴⁸ Lord Henry Gordon-Lennox to Disraeli, June 3rd, 1867, H.P., Box 102/3, Ref. B/XX/Ln./263b. The result in 1859 was: H.W.Freeland (Lib.) 300, Lord Henry Gordon-Lennox (Con.) 288, J.A.Smith (Lib.) 282. The latter was Liberal M.P. for Chichester from 1832-59 and 1863-8. He had already written something along these lines to Lennox:

"I am clear that it is the only way to keep a seat for the Goodwood interest - as you would have a...doubtful contest". Ibid., 263/a.

¹⁴⁹ Lord Henry Gordon-Lennox to Disraeli, March 1st, 1868, H.P., Box 41/2, Ref. B/IX/F/42a.

¹⁵⁰ Boundary Commission report for Chichester, February 5th, 1868.

portion of the citizens and today, my brother the Duke, writes, that he has protested against it in the strongest terms. So the Conservative party is divided against itself...”¹⁵¹

However, he survived all these trials and tribulations but plagued his party leader with others of a more personal nature. Chichester’s details were:

Electorate	1859	624	Population	1861	8,059
	1865	587		1871	9,054
	1868	1,224		1881	9,669
	1874	1,240			
	1880	1,203			

The market town of Horsham, in the north-eastern part of the Division, was a marginal seat.

Its political history went:

1848-65	Con.
1865-74	Lib.
1874-5	Con.
1876-80	Lib.
1880-5	Con.

As there were no boundary changes, the doubling of the electorate in this small borough aided the Liberals more than the Tories. There was no Conservative M.P. in the 1865 Parliament as the sitting Tory, W.R.S.V.Fitzgerald, lost his seat by five votes that year.¹⁵² Horsham’s details were:

Electorate	1859	387	Population	1861	6,747
	1865	400		1871	7,831
	1868	880		1881	9,552
	1874	955			
	1880	1,114			

¹⁵¹ Lord Henry Gordon-Lennox to Disraeli, September 15th, 1873, H.P., Box 102/4, Ref. B/XX/Lx./290. Lennox’s brief, biographical details were: 1821-86; M.P. (Con.) Chichester 1846-85; Secretary to the Admiralty 1866-8, 1st Commissioner of Works 1874-6. The bulk of his letters to Disraeli are in the 1850s when there was clearly a very close relationship between them. In the 1860s Disraeli acted, in part, as matrimonial adviser as Lennox searched frantically for a wife. After his embarrassing bout of ministerial incompetence in the 1874 Government, he oversaw the “Peace with Honour” celebrations in 1878.

¹⁵² Sir William Robert Seymour Vesey Fitzgerald, knighted 1868; 1818-85; M.P. (Con.) Horsham 1852-65 and 1874-5; Governor of Bombay 1867-72; Chief Charity Commissioner 1875-85.

Midhurst was a market town in the centre of north-west Sussex. At 26,000 acres it was, if not quite a rural district along the lines of 1885, then certainly a Tory pocket borough, being held by the party continuously from 1841-85. There were no contests from 1832-65 inclusively but after the 1867-8 Acts there took place two, inter-party (rather than intra-party), fights the details being:

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Con. majority</u>
1868	375	262	113
1880	501	283	218

There were no boundary changes. The Tory M.P. in the Reform Parliament was W.T.Mitford, whose family controlled the borough's politics.¹⁵³ Midhurst's details were:

Electorate	1859	429	Population	1861	6,405
	1865	362		1871	6,753
	1868	995		1881	7,221
	1874	1,009			
	1880	1,038			

New Shoreham was essentially an agricultural district, with some shipping at the old port which lay half-way between Brighton and Worthing, along the lines of 1885. It contained 42 parishes, constituted 112,000 acres and its northern boundary both reached, and encircled, Horsham. The huge size of the borough had an effect on the population figure for West Sussex. It was a Tory pocket borough with the party returning two M.P.s at every General Election from 1841-80 inclusively. The Liberals did not stand in either 1859 or 1868. In 1865 and 1874 the party ran one candidate but perhaps should not have bothered. However, then the Tory hegemony slipped markedly, firstly at the by-election held in August 1876 and then at the 1880 General Election when the second seat was only held by 136 votes.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ William Townley Mitford, succ. as 7th Earl of Egmont, 1874; b. 1817; M.P. (Con.) Midhurst 1859-74; owned 2,000acrs at Petworth when M.P. and 14,000 at Cowdray Park, Midhurst on inheriting the earldom.

¹⁵⁴ The relevant results were:
1874: Sir P. Burrell (Con.) 2,527, S.Cave (Con.) 2,414, W.Lyon (Lib.) 896; Con. majority (second-placed over third) 1,518.
1876: Sir W.W.Burrell (Con.) 2,152, W.E.Hubbard (Lib.) 1,394; Con. majority 758.
1880: Sir W.W.Burrell (Con.) 2,445, R.Loder (Con.) 2,195, W.E.Hubbard (Lib.) 2,059; Con. majority (second-placed over third) 136.

New Shoreham's details were:

Electorate	1859	1,843	Population	1861	32,622
	1865	1,999		1871	37,984
	1868	4,554		1881	42,559
	1874	4,998			
	1880	5,315			

A member of the Burrell family sat continuously for the borough from 1832-85. The Tory M.P.s in the 1865 Parliament were P.Burrell and S.Cave.¹⁵⁵

The overall situation in London and the South East was as follows:

	<u>County</u>	<u>County seats</u>	<u>Borough seats</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Sub-total</u>
1)	Berkshire	No change	Lib.-1	a)	-1L
2)	Buckinghamshire	No change	Con.-2, Lib.-1	b)	-1C
3)	Hampshire	No change	Con.-1, Lib.-1	c)	No change
4)	Isle of Wight	No change	Con.-1	d)	-1C
5)	Kent	Con.+2	Lib.+1	e)	+1C
6)	Middlesex	Con.+2	Lib.+4	f)	+2L
7)	Surrey	Con.+2	Lib.-2	g)	+4C
8)	Sussex	No change	Lib.-3	h)	-3L
	Total				+5C

- a) Berkshire: Loss of second seat in Windsor, -1Lib.
- b) Buckinghamshire: Loss of second seats in both Buckingham and Marlow, -2Con.; loss of second seat in Wycombe, -1Lib.
- c) Hampshire: Loss of second seat in Andover, -1Con.; loss of second seat in Lymington, -1Lib.
- d) Isle of Wight: Loss of second seat in Newport, -1Con.
- e) Kent: new Mid Division, +2 Con.; new Gravesend constituency, +1Lib.
- f) Middlesex: removal of Chelsea from Middlesex, +2 Con.; new London borough constituencies of Chelsea and Hackney, +4Lib.
- g) Surrey: new Mid Division, +2 Con.; loss of second Guildford seat, -1Lib., disfranchisement of Reigate, -1Lib.
- h) Sussex: disfranchisement of Arundel, -1Lib.; loss of second seats in both Chichester and Lewes, -2Libs.

¹⁵⁵ Sir Percy Burrell, 1812-76; M.P. (Con.) New Shoreham 1862-76; owned 9,000 acres at West Grinstead.

Sir Stephen Cave, knighted 1880, 1820-80; M.P. (Con.) New Shoreham 1859-80; vice-president, Board of Trade and Paymaster-General 1866-8, the latter only 1874-80; judge advocate-general 1874-5; special mission to Egypt 1875-6.